

# THE LONDON MERCURY

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

**J**UST as we go to press we learn that the roof of the Sala Sistina, in the Vatican Library, has fallen in. The popular press says that the Pope had only just left the Library, and narrowly escaped death; the *Times* does not mention the Pope; it may be presumed, therefore, that the Pope was in no danger. Several workmen and an Italian professor were "engulfed in the ruins." "15,000 Books Lost," runs the *Times* headline. But human beings can be suffocated and books cannot. A case was "carried away" containing:

The chronicle of Saint Sofia, a treatise of the Emperor Frederick II on falconry, a New Testament of the thirteenth century, and an English psalter and a copy of the Gospels in English.

That is all very well, or all very ill: but falling stones may bury books without destroying them, and we shall be surprised to learn, when the debris has been cleared away, that very many manuscripts or books of importance have actually been destroyed. Rain, during the period of clearance, may do great damage; but if there is no rain there seems to be no reason to suppose that very much will have been lost.

### Herculaneum

**T**HE press, during the last month has published a large number of photographs of newly excavated houses in Herculaneum. Two storied houses, baths and statuary have been recovered from the solidified mud; the question is, will another library be discovered. Long ago they did unearth a library there, which was owned by a crank with (roughly) Mr. Bernard Shaw's opinions, and consisted almost entirely of the work of a vegetarian philosopher called (if we remember aright) Philodemus of Gadara. Any day may bring to light some library, safely coffered amid the surrounding mud, containing the lost classics—Sappho's works, the lost plays of the great tragedians, the lost historians, and those Greek lyrics

which were expunged from the later editions of the Anthology. Before the war foreign enthusiasts endeavoured in vain to obtain concessions from the Italian Government for the excavation of Herculaneum. The best terms offered were that the foreigners should do all the digging at their own expense, and that the Italian Government should be given everything dug up. We are not political : but we do think that this should count on the credit side for Signor Mussolini. Even in these bad times, so great is his Italian pride and so determined is he to rouse Italian pride, that he has organized an official excavation of Herculaneum. If he can only discover a MS. of Sappho he will probably, via America, be able to recoup himself for the whole expense of removing Resina and bringing Herculaneum to light. People do not realise it : but Pompeii was to Herculaneum as Margate is to Bath.

### The Threat to the Peak

THE Council for the Preservation of Rural England (Sheffield and Peak District Committee) has published a charming pamphlet entitled *The Threat to the Peak*, with a preface by Professor G. M. Trevelyan. Professor Trevelyan says, "The future is on our side in no small degree, if we can hold the fort for another generation." That is the difficulty. Surely there never was more talk than there is now about hideous advertisements, jerry-building and the necessity of town-planning on a large scale : meanwhile the Government does next to nothing, county authorities do not use the powers they have to control advertisements, the new arterial roads are lined by mushroom growths of "ribbon-development," with hen-coop houses covered with "Teas, Teas, Teas," and ancient examples of town-planning are destroyed much more rapidly than new examples of town-planning are constructed. Mammon is King. Why won't people realise this ? Decent M.P.'s are afraid of their constituents ; decent Managing Directors are afraid of their shareholders. "Democracy" and the limited liability company have brought us to this pass : but with our usual incurable sentimentality we will not admit it. It is a strange state of things. This is not the only question concerning which nine people out of ten, who will express an opinion at all, will express the same opinion, and yet nothing gets done.

### The London Artists' Association

THE London Artists' Association has held at Cooling's Galleries an exhibition of decorative work designed by its members. The exhibition included pottery, furniture, carpets and textiles, but the textiles which were manufactured by Messrs. Allan Walton were the most prominent and important of the exhibits. Products of industrial art designed by pictorial artists and sometimes also executed by them are too often spoilt by poor craftsmanship. Frequently the designer, not being

himself a craftsman, does not thoroughly understand his medium. This was the great defect of the products of Mr. Roger Fry's now defunct enterprise, the Omega workshops. There were signs of this amateurishness in the pieces of furniture in the present exhibition, which were charmingly painted, but carelessly constructed and the pottery too was painters' work. But the textiles were satisfactory in every respect. It is a common experience of people in search of interesting patterns for interior decorations to have to ask for the French or German designs because the available English patterns are so hackneyed and unenterprising. The Allan Walton textiles compete seriously with contemporary foreign designs, if they do not beat them. There was not a single dull pattern in the exhibition, but particularly noteworthy were the fabrics designed by Frank Dobson, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. The colour harmonies and patterns are restrained and sober, and might carry a wide appeal, there being nothing particularly bizarre or modish about them. We have here a new development of English decorative art and one, moreover, with commercial possibilities. It is the misfortune, however, of the present age that any new thing which "takes on" is immediately copied with vulgar variations, and we have no doubt that very soon some of the less reputable firms will be "smartening up" modern English fabrics in the same way as they have "smartened up" modern furniture, with the same ghastly result. Why cannot they be satisfied with mass production of good designs?

### The French Exhibition

ON January 4th there will be opened at Burlington House an exhibition of French painting which bids fair to rival in importance and popularity the Italian Exhibition, the greatest of the wonderful series of exhibitions of foreign paintings which has been held in London during the last ten years. It has been a common feature of all the previous exhibitions that the modern paintings have shown a marked falling off in quality. In fact one tended to pass them by. In the French Exhibition, on the other hand, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings will, because of their inherent merits, be the centre of interest, and in numbers they will form a third of the whole exhibition. It is generally admitted that in the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist movements in France there came about a renaissance of painting, and these movements constitute an art that is still modern. The present exhibition will afford a unique opportunity of seeing as a whole this great modern school of painting and of enjoying and appraising some of the most famous works of its members, of Courbet, Manet, Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Renoir, Cézanne and Gauguin. In no other period of French painting is there quite such a constellation of artists of outstanding distinction, although from the seventeenth century onwards, starting with Poussin and Claude Lorrain, there has been a continuous succession of eminent painters. It is only necessary to mention

the names of Watteau, Fragonard, Chardin, Ingres, Gericault, Delacroix, all of whom will be well represented. There will also be a valuable collection of those faithful sixteenth-century portraits by the Clouets and others, of fifteenth-century paintings such as the Triptych from Moulins Cathedral, and the *Coronation of the Virgin*, by Charonton, and a number of illuminated MSS., including that marvel of miniatures, *Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc De Berry*.

#### The New English Music Society

AT the first performance in Queen's Hall of the New English Music Society, there were a fine programme and good performance. Mr. Keith Faulkner gave an almost perfect delivery of the Vaughan-Williams *Mystical Songs*, an early work ; Lennox Berkeley's *String Symphony* is a fine piece of string writing, good music and clever technical writing ; the height of the programme was reached with the magnificent Purcell *Coronation Anthem*. The Society is an admirable institution, producing the finest lesser-known works, old or new, as nearly as possible in accordance with the composer's intention. They go in for music as music without grandeur or "uplift," and have a very fine Chamber Orchestra and a newly-formed choir with an excellent sense of style.



## JONAH

Woodcut by PAMELA d' A. NATHAN

## LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

**I**N *Modern Book Illustration in Great Britain and America* (7s. 6d.), the *Studio* provides another magnificent contribution to the science of intelligent book-production. Here, in the form of a short chronological review of illustration from Caxton to 1931, is an account of the last few years expanded to include every usage from engraved wood-block to "pochoir"; here also is a complete guide for the professional, and a gallery of over ten dozen reproductions of the best modern work of two continents. These are selected from the best work of almost all first-rate living illustrators, and there are colour plates of the work of D. P. Bliss, Rockwell Kent, Albert Rutherston, Rex Whistler and others.



**T**HE winter number of *The Green Quarterly* (Philip Allan. 1s.) contains a short true "ghost" story; a further account of the activities of the Bethnal Green Housing Society, upon whose useful work we have commented before; poems; book reviews; a thoughtful article on religious education; and an interesting account of the revival of the mediaeval feast of the "Boy Bishop" at Berdon in Essex. There are numerous illustrations, and the magazine is as usual attractively got up and well printed.



**W**E have received the sixty-first annual report of the Deputy Master and Comptroller of the Royal Mint. It is not generally realised that the activities of this Department embrace the design and execution of such varied works of art as the Great Seal of England and the Race Course Betting Control Board Badge; and extend from the Latvian five-lati piece to the Chinese dollar. From the illustrations provided, it cannot be said that the past year has provided any encouraging signs of improvement in official design. For example, the great medal struck by order of the King of Egypt in commemoration of his visit to this country shows what would be, in any but a State studio, a most lamentable lack of artistic feeling. In this particular instance, the heads upon the reverse, representing Britannia and Egypt, fill approximately only about one-third of the total face of the medal. Such paucity of composition compares unfavourably with even the less successful efforts of the classical period. The official British Empire style of art, and especially is this true of heraldic design, seems to be entirely unfitted to the limitations of the circular coin form. As far as execution is concerned, however, the work is worthy of the best traditions of English craftsmanship. The Report can be obtained from the Stationery Office for 4s. 6d.



**T**HE December number of the *Theatre Arts Monthly* (99, Regent Street, W.1. 2s. 6d.) deals principally with various aspects of the theatre in America. There are also articles on Jules Romains, the Soviet Theatre, the Broadcast Play and the Presepio, or Nativity Play, in Italy, as well as the usual London letter and book reviews. The illustrations are numerous and clear.

## POETRY

## FOUR SONNETS

*In the South Atlantic*

VAGRANT and slow, white avenues of clouds  
 Sail in high regions of the darkened sky,  
 A flock of tireless ghosts who trail their shrouds  
 Far out across the night's immensity.  
 Who are these lonely spirits ? from what land  
 Of cold aërial enchantment glide  
 These silent phantoms mirrored in the sand  
 Of the Atlantic shore's outgoing tide ?

Roll on, cold citadels of stormless life,  
 We are too crude to gather to your breast  
 Like sleeping children ; still too unrefined,  
 Polluted by the frenzy of our strife  
 To seek the shadows of your clouded rest  
 And drug the fitful terrors of the mind.

*The Elephants*

ON the cold terrace of a winter sky,  
 Blotting the nascent moon from earthly sight,  
 Yet fringed by one pale filament of white  
 The clouds patrol monotonously by.  
 The mango-grove is sinister and sly,  
 And on the boughs no foliage hides the night  
 That shrinks from contact with the leaping light  
 Cast by our watchfires burning fitfully.

This is no tent but an enchanted ark,  
 Where sounds on myriad sounds have leapt and stirred.  
 There is no comfort in the pulsing dark  
 Till, through the rhythmic singing of the crickets,  
 Mighty and chained the elephants are heard  
 Restlessly stamping at their hammered pickets.

*Equatorial Forests*

**T**HROUGHOUT the year their days are much the same,  
Grand and extravagant and very still ;  
For sunk in torrid lethargies of will  
The seasons change no substance but their name.  
Rain and intolerable heat they bear  
Whose slow successive days are uniform,  
And every suffocating night a storm  
Charges the thunderless electric air.

Along profound impenetrable ways  
Fearful and fabulous lianas raise  
Their spiral tendrils poisonously curled.  
And lit by violent flashes in the sky  
The splendid scene awaking, vividly  
Reveals the monstrous beauty of the world.

*Water-Buffaloes*

**T**HEY haunt the shadowless and shoreless jheel  
That breeds white heat, malaria, and flies,  
And that the Indian sun's transmuting eyes  
Has burnished till it seems a lake of steel.  
Across the water skims a flight of teal.  
A ripple on its surface spreads and dies.  
The frail reeds stir ; and in their Paradise  
Of cool content, the buffaloes reveal

Their dark gray heads magnificently crowned  
Whose bodies stand invisible and drowned  
In shallows that the thirsty noon devours.  
And so, like mystics in a state of grace  
That mildly meditate on time and space,  
With clay-blue eyes they pass the scorching hours.

YVONNE FFRENCH

*Car Loads*

(An acknowledgment of origin is concealed in the first line.)

**Q**UADRIGA of Trajan, the laureate's car goes ;  
 Four greys tight-reined pace the hippodrome,  
     With a slave-train of captives,  
     Sun-baked, footsore,  
 Wild-haired Dacians beneath the yoke of Rome.

*Tally-ho* spanking down the rime-bound turnpike  
 Twelve mile an hour to the horn's toot-toot,  
     With shawl-caped Outsides  
     Travelling to Christmas—  
 Codfish, oysters, and brandy in the boot.

Filthy British charabanc, hogging down the tarmac,  
 Shattering the Sabbath in an English June,  
     With a foul load of half-wits,  
     Booze-blown, fag-fumed,  
 Crapulous, cacophonous with lewd jazz tune.

F. SIDGWICK

*Primavera*

**S**OMETHING seems stirring underneath the tangles,  
 Where of late the snow-wreaths pressed the faded grasses ;  
 Chilling the elves that take the form of flow'rets  
 When comes the sunshine.

Is it the dormouse moves among the mosses,  
 Wearied of sleeping, dreams the thicket wakens ;  
 Or do young fern-fronds, and the woodbine tendrils,  
     Stretch them uneasy ?

Is Echo calling ? No ; 'tis Primavera  
 Whispers through the woodland, soon the snowdrop hears her ;  
 Now the rathe almond—reckless of the March wind—  
     Burgeons and blossoms.

Hasten to meet her while she trips towards thee—  
 Else shalt thou lose the frolic and the freshness  
 That wait on winter, but dare hardly linger  
     Lest summer catch them.

DARLING

## TWO POEMS

*Write-Up*

**M**Y publishers wrote to me,  
 in the manner of publishers (I keep  
 all their letters) and said,  
 "What about a little bit of write-up?  
 help sell the book . . . help our travellers  
 sell the book," . . . so I, being a poet, replied—  
 in verse, which they,  
 being publishers, refused.

Nevertheless, I being a poet, being hardened,  
 decided to outdo,  
 to Hoodwink, to Gainsay,  
 in fact to Steal A March On them.  
 So I print my  
 Little Bit of  
 write-up here,  
 knowing (it is a secret you and I share)  
 that my publishers, being publishers,  
 will never, no never, find it,  
 and we shall live happy  
 (it ought to be happily . . . those old poets  
 took dreadful liberties—)  
 ever after  
 (with our heritage, storehouse  
 of language, which publishers  
 think needs a write-up).

*Philologist*

**T**YPING hurriedly,  
 whenever I use the word "play"  
 I hit on the keys that spell "paly."  
 I have done this so often, being always  
 in a hurry when typing, that the word  
 exists now, "paly" means something, somewhere.

Where, I have not yet made out.  
 It does not stand just for dismay  
 or for anger—it has a life beyond that.

I am not tracing the cause that makes me  
hit the keys in that order ; I am seeking  
what it is I am sure the word means,  
that there is no other to mean.

I wonder how much I shall have to go through  
to be able to use it, speaking to you  
or whoever the next is.

ROBERT HERRING

## *On Being Lent Von Hügel by a Friend*

(To W. P. Kelly)

**A**TTACK that stronghold, truth, again,  
Baffled so oft, in vain  
Casting a ditch about its untroubled walls ?  
What purpose served, what gain,  
What return out of pain,  
If neither gate nor even outpost fall ?  
Too safely held.  
Too customed to assault,  
Too used to fault  
Of over-eager, easy-routed foe ;  
Do we not know, confess,  
No jot the more or less,  
But only rumour swift to change and grow ?  
Denied ? Your army holds  
Passport of entry ? Only password then,  
Hearsay of wiser men,  
Watchword to speed  
Fresh forces up at need,  
When the last charge has failed, the fault to mend ?  
Lend me your book then, friend.

O wise gay words of ever gentle age,  
Lightening the graver page,  
What power breathed you into kindly clay,  
Sent you my way,  
Pilate-like, questioning, not one Head bowed,  
But the untutored, ever curious crowd,  
Elbowing each without,  
Echoing doubt with doubt,  
Greedy of comfort, comfort offering none ?

Here was not one  
To barter argument as these have done,  
Adding his chatter to the general cry,  
To set the camp ablaze with latest lie ;  
To come and go,  
Fencing for shadow ground with shadow foe.  
Rather the patient gaze,  
Passionate stern-ruled days,  
The doubt unwhispered even unto friend ;  
The hope, the unflinching eye,  
The head held always high,  
The shoulder swift to service to the end.  
Set down this certitude,  
Creature of deeper mood  
Than idle weighing niggard hint with hint  
The city does not fall  
Presently nor at all,  
No glint, no gleam of sword, no haughty word,  
Challenging from the depths the heights, has power  
To steal her secret, to unman her tower.  
But on removed ground,—  
In sight but out of sound,  
Lost to the clamour and the angry cries,  
With the same skies  
And over-looking still the longed-for goal ;  
Accepting dole  
In place of plunder,  
Silence in place of thunder,  
Content,  
Not full content but still content to breathe  
Breezes blown off at eve  
From the once almost-handled battlement,—  
Is place  
A little space,  
Too little space but space to stand and fill  
The straining eyes  
From hill to further hill  
With glimpse of cloudy-outlined distant prize.  
Soil no longer  
Spoil of stronger  
But patient as a field awaiting dew ;  
And in those meadows wait the expectant few.

MONK GIBBON

*The Loom of Time*

**T**HINK not that this is dead,  
This living moment past  
Leading us on some hour, some day ahead,  
Into the unbounded future ; or the vast  
Of that inevitable we cannot see,  
Our vision being silted up with man's blind dreams,  
His aspirations. Think not that this ' to be '  
Ever can end, can ever die, although it seems  
Sometimes to sleep where in the time-filled years  
The memory revolves her endless spheres,  
And dies not, and is never dead.  
Time does not pass and end.  
Of some such godlike fire  
Our actions being offshoots, that they blend  
One with eternity. Even man's desire,  
Brittle and transitory as a gust of wind,  
Has yet this legacy of the immortal.  
Somewhere in space, each moment coloured by the mind  
Dwells in the pristine of its birth. Neither all  
Men's efforts can efface or magnify  
That being past, stale its infinity,  
Or alter for a day its trend.

M. STANLEY LOW

## THE END OF THE PARTY

By GRAHAM GREENE

PETER MORTON woke with a start to face the first light. Through the window he could see a bare bough drooping across a frame of silver. Rain tapped against the glass with the sound of nervous fingers. It was February the fifth.

He looked across a table, on which a night light had guttered into a pool of water, at the other bed. Francis Morton was still asleep, and Peter lay down again with his eyes on his brother. It amused him to imagine that it was himself whom he watched, the same hair, the same eyes, the same lips and line of cheek. But the thought soon palled, and the mind went back to the fact which lent the day importance. It was the fifth of February. He could hardly believe that a year had passed since Mrs. Henne-Falcon had given her last children's party.

Francis turned suddenly upon his back and threw an arm across his face, blocking his mouth. Peter's heart began to beat fast, not with pleasure now but with uneasiness. He sat up and called across the table, "Wake up." Francis's shoulders shook and he waved a clenched fist in the air, but his eyes remained closed. To Peter Morton the whole room seemed suddenly to darken, and he had the impression of a great bird swooping. He cried again, "Wake up," and once more there was silver light and the touch of rain on the windows. Francis rubbed his eyes. "Did you call out?" he asked.

"You are having a bad dream," Peter said with confidence. Already experience had taught him how far their minds reflected each other. But he was the elder, by a matter of minutes, and that brief extra interval of light, while his brother still struggled in pain and darkness, had given him self-reliance and an instinct of protection towards the other who was afraid of so many things.

"I dreamed that I was dead," Francis said.

"What was it like?" Peter asked with curiosity.

"I can't remember," Francis said, and his eyes turned with relief to the silver of day, as he allowed the fragmentary memories to fade.

"You dreamed of a big bird."

"Did I?" Francis accepted his brother's knowledge without question, and for a little the two lay silent in bed facing each other, the same green eyes, the same nose tilting at the tip, the same firm lips parted, and the same premature modelling of the chin. The fifth of February, Peter thought again, his mind drifting idly from the image of cakes to the prizes which might be won. Egg-and-spoon races, spearing apples in basins of water, blind man's buff.

"I don't want to go," Francis said suddenly. "I suppose Joyce will be there . . . Mabel Warren." Hatred to him the thought of a party shared

with those two. They were older than he. Joyce was thirteen and Mabel Warren fifteen. Their long pigtailed swung superciliously to a masculine stride. Their sex humiliated him, as they watched him fumble with his egg, from under lowered, scornful lids. And last year . . . he turned his face away from Peter, his cheeks scarlet.

"What's the matter?" Peter asked.

"Oh, nothing. I don't think I'm well. I've got a cold. I oughtn't to go to the party."

Peter was puzzled. "But Francis, is it a bad cold?"

"It will be a bad cold if I go to the party. Perhaps I shall die."

"Then you mustn't go," Peter said with decision, prepared to solve all difficulties with one plain sentence, and Francis let his nerves relax in a delicious relief, ready to leave everything to Peter. But though he was grateful he did not yet turn his face towards his brother. His cheeks still bore the badge of a shameful memory, of the game of hide and seek last year in the darkened house, and of how he had screamed when Mabel Warren put her hand suddenly upon his arm. He had not heard her coming. Girls were like that. Their shoes never squeaked. No boards whined under their tread. They slunk like cats on padded paws.

When the nurse came in with hot water Francis lay tranquil, leaving everything to Peter. Peter said, "Nurse, Francis has got a cold."

The tall, starched woman laid the towels across the cans and said, without turning: "The washing won't be back till to-morrow. You must lend him some of your handkerchiefs."

"But, nurse," Peter asked, "hadn't he better stay in bed?"

"We'll take him for a good walk this morning," the nurse said. "Wind'll blow away the germs. Get up now, both of you," and she closed the door behind her.

"I'm sorry," Peter said and then, worried at the sight of a face creased again by misery and forboding, "Why don't you just stay in bed? I'll tell mother you felt too ill to get up."

But such a rebellion against destiny was not in Francis's power. Besides, if he stayed in bed they would come up and tap his chest and put a thermometer in his mouth and look at his tongue, and they would discover that he was malingering. It was true that he felt ill, a sick, empty sensation in his stomach and a rapidly beating heart, but he knew that the cause was only fear, fear of the party, fear of being made to hide by himself in the dark, unaccompanied by Peter and with no night light to make a blessed breach.

"No, I'll get up," he said, and then with sudden desperation, "But I won't go to Mrs. Henne-Falcon's party. I swear on the Bible I won't." Now surely all would be well, he thought. God would not allow him to break so solemn an oath. He would show him a way. There was all the morning before Him and all the afternoon until four o'clock. No need to worry now when the grass was still crisp with the early frost. Anything might happen. He might cut himself or break his leg or really catch a bad cold. God would manage somehow.

He had such confidence in God that when at breakfast his mother said, "I hear you have a cold, Francis," he made light of it. "We should have heard more about it," his mother said with irony, "if there was not a party this evening." And Francis smiled uneasily, amazed and daunted by her ignorance of him. His happiness would have lasted longer if, out for a walk that morning, he had not met Joyce. He was alone with his nurse, for Peter had leave to finish a rabbit hutch in the woodshed. If Peter had been there he would have cared less; the nurse was Peter's nurse also, but now it was as though she were employed only for his sake, because he could not be trusted to go for a walk alone. Joyce was only two years older and she was by herself.

She came striding towards them, pigtails flapping. She glanced scornfully at Francis and spoke with ostentation to the nurse. "Hello, nurse. Are you bringing Francis to the party this evening? Mabel and I are coming." And she was off again down the street in the direction of Mabel Warren's home, consciously alone and self-sufficient in the long, empty road. "Such a nice girl," the nurse said. But Francis was silent, feeling again the jump-jump of his heart, realising how soon the hour of the party would arrive. God had done nothing for him, and the minutes flew.

They flew too quickly to plan any evasion, or even to prepare his heart for the coming ordeal. Panic nearly overcame him when, all unready, he found himself standing on the doorstep, with coat collar turned up against a cold wind, and the nurse's electric torch making a short, luminous trail through the darkness. Behind him were the lights of the hall and the sound of a servant laying the table for dinner, which his mother and father would eat alone. He was nearly overcome by a desire to run back into the house and call out to his mother that he would not go to the party, that he dared not go. They could not make him go. Almost he could hear himself saying those final words, breaking down for ever, as he knew instinctively, the barrier of ignorance that saved his mind from his parent's knowledge. "I'm afraid of going. I won't go. I daren't go. They'll make me hide in the dark, and I'm afraid of the dark. I'll scream and scream and scream." He could see the expression of amazement on his mother's face, and then the cold confidence of a grown-up's retort. "Don't be silly. You must go. We've accepted Mrs. Henne-Falcon's invitation." But they couldn't make him go; hesitating on the doorstep while the nurse's feet crunched across the frost-covered grass to the gate, he knew that. He would answer: "You can say I'm ill. I won't go. I won't go. I'm afraid of the dark." And his mother: "Don't be silly. You know there's nothing to be afraid of in the dark." But he knew the falsity of that reasoning; he knew how they taught also that there was nothing to fear in death, and how they pushed and fought and cowered to avoid it. But they couldn't make him go to the party. "I'll scream. I'll scream."

"Francis, come along." He heard the nurse's voice across the black, dimly phosphorescent lawn, and saw the small, yellow circle of her torch wheel from tree to shrub and back to tree again. "I'm coming," he called

with despair, and left the lighted doorway of the house, for he could not bring himself to lay bare his last secrets and end reserve between his mother and himself.

And there was still in the last resort a further appeal possible to Mrs. Henne-Falcon. He comforted himself with that, as he advanced steadily across the hall, very small, towards her enormous bulk. His heart beat unevenly, but he had control now over his voice, as he said with meticulous accent, "Good evening, Mrs. Henne-Falcon. It was very good of you to ask me to your party." With his strained face lifted towards the curve of her breasts, and his polite, set speech, he was like an old, withered man. For Francis mingled little with other children. As a twin he was in many ways an only child. To address Peter was to speak to his own image in a mirror, an image a little altered by a flaw in the glass, so as to throw back less a likeness of what he was than of what he wished to be, what he would be without his unreasoning fear of darkness, footsteps of strangers, the flight of bats in dusk-filled gardens.

"Sweet child," said Mrs. Henne-Falcon absentmindedly before, with a wave of her arms, as though the children were a flock of chickens, she whirled them into her set programme of entertainments, egg-and-spoon races, three-legged races, the spearing of apples, games which held for Francis nothing worse than humiliation. And in the frequent intervals when nothing was required of him and he could stand alone in corners as far removed as possible from Mabel Warren's scornful gaze, he was able to plan how he might avoid the approaching terror of the dark. There was nothing, he knew, to fear until after tea, and not until he was sitting down in a pool of yellow radiance cast by the ten candles on Colin Henne-Falcon's birthday-cake did he become fully conscious of the imminence of what he feared. Through the confusion of his brain, now assailed suddenly by a dozen contradictory plans, he heard Joyce's high voice down the table. "After tea we are going to play hide and seek in the dark."

"Oh no," Peter said, watching Francis's troubled face with pity and an imperfect understanding, "don't let's. We play that every year."

"But it's in the programme," cried Mabel Warren. "I saw it myself. I looked over Mrs. Henne-Falcon's shoulder. Five o'clock, tea. A quarter to six to half past six, hide and seek in the dark. It's all written down in the programme."

Peter did not argue, for if hide and seek had been inserted in Mrs. Henne-Falcon's programme, nothing which he might say could avert it. He asked for another piece of birthday cake and sipped his tea slowly. Perhaps it might be possible to delay the game for a quarter of an hour, allow Francis at least a few extra minutes to form a plan, but even in that Peter failed, for children were already leaving the table in twos and threes. It was his third failure, and again, as though the reflection of an image in another's mind, he saw a great bird darken his brother's face with its wings. But he upbraided himself silently for his folly, and finished his cake encouraged by the memory of that adult refrain, "There's nothing to fear in the dark."

The last to leave the table, the brothers came together to the hall to meet the mustering and impatient eyes of Mrs. Henne-Falcon.

"And now," she said, "we will play hide and seek in the dark."

Peter watched his brother and saw, as he had expected, the lips tighten. Francis, he knew, had feared this moment from the beginning of the party, had tried to meet it with courage and had abandoned the attempt. He must have prayed desperately for cunning to evade the game, which was now welcomed with cries of excitement by all the other children. "Oh, do let's." "We must pick sides." "Is any of the house out of bounds?" "Where shall home be?"

"I think," said Francis Morton, approaching Mrs. Henne-Falcon, his eyes focussed unwaveringly on her exuberant breasts, "it will be no use my playing. My nurse will be calling for me very soon."

"Oh, but your nurse can wait, Francis," said Mrs. Henne-Falcon absentmindedly, while she clapped her hands together to summon to her side a few children who were already straying up the wide staircase to upper floors. "Your mother will never mind."

That had been the limit of Francis's cunning. He had refused to believe that so well-prepared an excuse could fail. All that he could say now, still in the precise tone which other children hated, thinking it a symbol of conceit, was, "I think I had better not play." He stood motionless, retaining, though afraid, unmoved features. But the knowledge of his terror, or rather the reflection of the terror itself, breached his brother's mind. For the moment Peter Morton could have cried aloud with the fear of bright lights going out, leaving him alone in an island of dark surrounded by the gentle lapping of strange footsteps. Then he remembered that the fear was not his own, but his brother's. He said impulsively to Mrs. Henne-Falcon, "Please. I don't think Francis should play. The dark makes him jump so." They were the wrong words. Six children began to sing "Cowardy, cowardy custard," turning torturing faces with the vacancy of wide sunflowers towards Francis Morton.

Without looking at his brother, Francis said, "Of course I will play. I am not afraid. I only thought. . . ." But he was already forgotten by his human tormentors and was able in loneliness to contemplate the approach of the spiritual and more unbounded torture. The children scrambled round Mrs. Henne-Falcon, their shrill voices pecking at her with questions and suggestions. "Yes, anywhere in the house. We will turn out all the lights. Yes, you can hide in cupboards. You must stay hidden as long as you can. There will be no home."

Peter, too, stood apart, ashamed of the clumsy manner in which he had tried to help his brother. Now he could feel, creeping in at the corners of his brain, all Francis's resentment of his championing. Several children ran upstairs, and the lights on the top floor went out. Then darkness came down like the wings of a bat and settled on the landing. Others began to put out the lights at the edge of the hall, till the children were all gathered in the single, central radiance of the chandelier, while the bats squatted

round on hooded wings and waited for that, too, to be extinguished.

"You and Francis are on the hiding side," a tall girl said, and then the light was gone, and the carpet wavered under his feet with the sibilance of footfalls, like small, cold draughts, creeping away into corners.

"Where is Francis?" he wondered. "If I join him he will be less frightened of all these sounds." "These sounds" were the casing of silence. The squeak of a loose board, the cautious closing of a cupboard door, the whine of a finger drawn along polished wood.

Peter stood in the centre of the dark, deserted floor, not listening, but waiting for the idea of his brother's whereabouts to enter his brain. But Francis crouched with fingers on his ears, eyes uselessly closed, mind numbed against impressions, and only a sense of strain could cross the gap of dark. Then a voice called "Coming," and as though his brother's self-possession had been shattered by the sudden cry, Peter Morton jumped with his fear. But it was not his own fear. What in his brother was a burning panic, that admitted no ideas except those which ministered to the flame, was in him an altruistic emotion that left the reason unimpaired. "Where, if I were Francis, should I hide?" Such, roughly, was his thought. And because he was, if not Francis himself, at least a mirror to him, the answer was immediate. "Between the oak bookcase, on the left of the study door, and the leather settee." Peter Morton was unsurprised by the swiftness of the response. Between the twins there could be no jargon of telepathy. They had been together in the womb, and they could not now be parted.

Peter Morton tiptoed towards Francis's hiding place. Occasionally a board rattled, and because he feared to be caught by one of the soft questers through the dark, he bent and untied his laces. A tag struck the floor and the metallic sound set a host of cautious feet moving in his direction. But by that time he was in his stockings and would have laughed inwardly at the pursuit had not the noise of someone stumbling on his abandoned shoes made his heart trip in the reflection of another's surprise. No more boards revealed Peter Morton's progress. On stockinged feet he moved silently and unerringly towards his object. Instinct told him that he was near the wall, and, extending a hand, he laid the fingers across his brother's face.

Francis did not cry out, but the leap of his own heart revealed to Peter a proportion of Francis's terror. "It's all right," he whispered, feeling down the squatting figure until he captured a clenched hand. "It's only me. I'll stay with you." And grasping the other tightly, he listened to the cascade of whispers his utterance had caused to fall. A hand touched the bookcase close to Peter's head and he was aware of how Francis's fear continued in spite of his presence. It was less intense, more bearable he hoped, but it remained. He knew that it was his brother's fear and not his own that he experienced. The dark to him was only an absence of light; the groping hand that of a familiar child. Patiently he waited to be found.

He did not speak again, for between Francis and himself touch was the most intimate communion. By way of the joined hands thought could flow more swiftly than lips could shape themselves round words. He could experience the whole progress of his brother's emotion, from the leap of panic at the unexpected contact to the steady pulse of fear, which now went on and on with the regularity of a heart beat. Peter Morton thought with intensity, "I am here. You needn't be afraid. The lights will go on again soon. That rustle, that movement, is nothing to fear. Only Joyce, only Mabel Warren." He bombarded the drooping form with thoughts of safety, but he was conscious that the fear continued. "They are beginning to whisper together. They are tired of looking for us. The lights will go on soon. We shall have won. Don't be afraid. That was only someone on the stairs. I believe it's Mrs. Henne-Falcon. Listen. They are feeling for the lights." Feet moving on a carpet, hands brushing a wall, a curtain pulled apart, a clicking handle, the opening of a cupboard door. In the case above their heads a loose book shifted under a touch. "Only Joyce, only Mabel Warren, only Mrs. Henne-Falcon," a crescendo of reassuring thought before the chandelier burst, like a fruit tree, into bloom.

The voices of the children rose shrilly into the radiance. "Where's Peter?" "Have you looked upstairs?" "Where's Francis?" but they were silenced again by Mrs. Henne-Falcon's scream. But she was not the first to notice Francis Morton's stillness, where he had collapsed against the wall at the touch of his brother's hand. Peter continued to hold the clenched fingers, in an arid and puzzled grief. It was not merely that his brother was dead. His brain, too young to realise the full paradox, yet wondered with an obscure self-pity why it was that the pulse of his brother's fear went on, when Francis was now where he had been always told there was no more terror and no more darkness.

# THE COUNTRY HOUSE

By ALAN PRYCE-JONES

## I

**I**N the west of England is the house of Larkfield, a large house designed by William Chambers at the height of the eighteenth century. And although it is in the west of England, and not far from Ross, in a district which could be known for English by the colour of its apples alone, a romantic style of architecture was chosen by the builder, Lord Belvedere, who had lately acquired an immense fortune by introducing rotten boroughs into Bengal.

The drive leads through a Gothic arch into the park. At all seasons of the year the iron railings are wet which confine to one quarter of the park a handful of sheep. The drops of water run along each rail to the lowest corner—they can be magnetised by a finger, or, if touched, flatten to a smear—where the iron post slips the water down to fat tufts at the feet of the laurels. Moss cushions divide the grass and sometimes, especially below the beeches, a thin moss carpet spreads yellow-green almost to the park on one hand, and into the drive on the other, although successive wheels have pressed out the velvet to the texture of silk. But not the railings only, for the trees as well, are washed by a perpetual damp, by a sort of autumnal freshness apart from the rain and the dew, or perhaps by nothing more than the usual distillation of thick trees, the soaking creation of truffles and rotten mast and greenly illegible warnings to trespassers.

Halfway to the house a lime avenue, now a mown ride, leads uphill to the site of an earlier house, marked by an octagonal hermitage, a mere octagon screen, unroofed, inside which a few stones do duty for a grot in the 1820 taste. And, throughout the last half of the drive, the beech-woods disclose now a rustic house, open on one side and filled with dusty benches, a rusty mowing-machine, and such croquet balls as the dogs have eaten or which have split from lying out at night; now a sandstone pillar topped with a grenade, to commemorate the exploits of a Lord Belvedere at the battle of Quiberon Bay, with a later marble plaque inserted in memory of the late marquis's notable conduct in the Ashanti War; now a small cemetery where lie Roy and Towzer, Rally and Spot, Doris, beloved rabbit, Jack and Jill, the canaries, Twist, the spaniel, and Meg Merrilies; now a second rustic hut with blue and red glass set round the frosted windows—this is quite empty but for a trap-door; now a tanglewood which had been intended for a rhododendron garden. The rhododendrons, all wild, cover the ground in spring with scarlet hoods, in autumn with crumpled leaves hard as a biscuit, as curly and brown as the petits fours which are stuck in strawberry ices at a garden party.

Not far from the house an iron gate marks the beginning of the garden and soon, from a high Palladian bridge over an ornamental cascade, you

can see the kitchen-garden wall to the right, the tree-broken line of house to the left. The trees are full of birds ; from Triton's fleshy lips the water leaps in glittering parcels ; Daphne, half turned to laurel, and all in stucco, guards the Doric screen at the head of the cascade ; in stone basins among the trees Narcissus stands with short sword and toga, buskined Tragedy, Clio with a wreath ; but these are scarcely noticed, so odd is the house itself of Larkfield.

In the centre of the main block, and like the bulb of a tulip, a tall copper dome curves over the English limes of the terrace ; at the four corners four minarets, surmounted by a fringed copper hat, rise high above the dome. That part of the garden which lies between the house and the cascade is chaste enough, by contrast. A great *Wellingtonia* stands in the middle of flowering *berberis* ; in the wide, square lawn a sunk azalea garden waits all the year for a ten days' triumph. This part of the garden was laid out by Lady Hermione, only child of the late and last marquis, in the early years of this century, with an eye to ornamental clumps round which the trailing ladies could escape from gallant and elderly peers, an oblong of grass for the marquee, a raised platform for the Royal Artillery Band, and a quick way through the shrubbery to the kitchen, so that the ices might not melt before they reached the party. In a cupboard in the hall is still a number of those parasols of linen lined with dark green, cane-handled, which are often the sole relics of before-the-war, parasols which kept the angry pre-war sun from fragile rosebuds, or from their mothers, unbroken by a middle-age spent—we are told—entirely on small gold chairs.

But the real garden is at the other side of the house. A semi-circular conservatory, built at the same period as the house, and leading out of the breakfast room, encloses a sunk lawn, in which Niobe fills a fountain with unending tears, and also from a small jar. In front, most beautiful in the early morning when the cattle in the park are steaming, and the arched masses of Dorothy Perkins are made white as glass by the dew, long terraces lead to the park, long slopes of the park lead down to the lake, and beyond the lake the woods rise again, to the crest of a low hill, and I don't know where.

No summer is allowed in the woods, whose time is winter, when the fallen branches are black and wet as the park railings, and it is not possible to walk in the overgrown paths without catching green marks on clothes, and that chilly, hard feeling in the feet which comes just before water breaks through a flaw in the shoe-sole.

Visitors are always taken across the woods because from them the house seems larger than from anywhere else. Long living in it has made the owners forget how curious it looks, how exotic the sparkling minarets, how disproportionate the conservatory, filled with oranges and tulip-trees, rough begonia (which never really "does" in artificial soil), some cactus to amuse the children (who are already, of course, grown up). In the conservatory the smell is not of flowers but of leaves, a heavy smell reminiscent

of gross stems, white fibres like soft spines, and thick leaves which look as though a damp mould were upon them, so close the fibres grow.

And at the end of the semi-circle is an ingenious gazebo, copied from one at the Brighton Pavilion, which in summer can be stripped of its glass and converted to an open tent-room.

Inside the house, no oriental taste has been allowed. Windows, which on the outside are moulded, by some geographical mistake, into a Moorish arch, are sober Georgian oblongs within. Silks of the period of William IV panel some of the rooms, miraculously fresh ; but you can easily conceive the drawing rooms and libraries and self-indulgent fancies of the architect, the Egyptian cabinet and the unique dodecahedron. A more interesting part of the house begins through a varnished door under the staircase. Hence a long passage, paved with big flags and smelling of wet clothes, leads deviously to the kitchen in which, at any time, Mrs. Ingram will produce a buttered scone and a glass of milk. But long before the back premises proper are several small rooms—a cube, papered in brown trellis, with one or two cabinets of birds' eggs, a harmonium, and a bookcase filled with Grynaeus, a vellum Quintilian, a few volumes of Robertson's sermons, Sprat's poems, Falconer's *Shipwreck*, a presentation copy from Lord de Tabley, and an old volume of Wisden ; next to this room, the Flower-room with a long table in the window and a heavy basket full of cut and oozy stalks ; next to the Flower-room, the Gun-room, very dark, its walls hung with bandoliers, and on an ugly yellow table some rubber stamps—a date stamp which has stuck at *Dec. 1, 1894*, a press stamp for writing paper, quite clogged up—the shaft of a small axe, and, in a file of pink cardboard the typed estate accounts as well as a brochure about the island of Wisby unaccountably.

A narrow staircase leads out of a fourth room given up entirely to rows of bells, thick-wired, and illegibly labelled, to the second floor. All the more delightful bedrooms are here, disposed in passages papered in green trellis ; but the rooms have a very sun-blown paper of brown-gone-yellow, or a neat paper of roses no bigger than a button, or even a wash only, of Saxony blue, with black where the pictures have been changed. The rooms below are too self-conscious, too contemptuous of visitors who have come without a maid ; but on this floor the china does not match on the wash-hand stand nor, though always a brand-new piece of sealing wax on the table, is there any ink in the inkpot.

From nowhere is it easy to reach the dome. A trap-door in the ceiling of a bathroom has to be opened, step-ladders brought. A second trap-door leads to the roof, round which a path of slippery duckboards has been laid, and so to the dome.

There is a certain oriental profusion on the roof. The chimneys issue through an iron lotus, the copper on the dome, weather-beaten and dented, has been frilled at the edge like the end-paper of a ham. But nobody looks long at these singularities, for the garden is spread out with far greater artifice, offending Nature by resembling her so closely, but as it

were at two removes, for the best gardens resemble Nature made into a garden to resemble Nature.

Gardeners are tussling with the slugs, Lady Hermione is reading *The Grand Babylon Hotel* under a cedar ; from above, the tulip-trees in the conservatory look like a Christmas arrangement ; Niobe's tears cease to flow while Jock cleans the basin. Colin marks the beginning of Autumn by taking ladder and shears to the yews. The garden is at that period of the year when it has an unearthly steadiness before the clipping and crinkling and blackening of September. A faint noise drifts out of the yards at the side of the house. The " engine," a contrivance of belts and wheels, more to entertain Pack, the engineman, than for any household use, gives a prim noise to the air ; Barrow jangles the harness, Stubb rolls a cask—a quick noise ; the slow noise of sawing is added from nowhere in particular. Beside the low church at the corner of the kitchen-garden, someone is making a commotion in the boughs of a cherry-tree.

## II

Somewhere in the house were Henry and Anne, Lady Hermione's children, and her mother-in-law, who, left a widow, had offended the servants by marrying a clergyman ; she was therefore now plain Mrs. Carey, and again a widow.

Mrs. Carey, whose health had lately been giving more alarm, took small part in the house, although sometimes she came neatly into the almost-unfurnished ballroom when no-one was about, to play a few patriotic wartime airs, with a great rattling of finger-nail on the keys. On the lid of the piano were a quantity of these extraordinary tunes, such as *Whoops, Montenegro*, or *With an Anzac in My Knapsack*, or very serious airs such as, *Latvia, lift thy bleeding brow*, or indignant ones, *Ha, Prussia, thou wilt rue*. The silk walls echoed to this energy, for Mrs. Carey greatly enjoyed the recollection of England's victories and sometimes, when her daughter and her grandchildren were out of the house she used to sing to herself, drowning the words in the rush of the tune,

On Sunday I walk out with a soldier,

On Monday I'm saucy with a tar ;

On Tuesday I'm out with a baby boy-scout—

These songs had given her a heroic conception of her son, Lady Hermione's husband, and when he was killed had made a sour dirge over him ; she was an illicit old woman in her griefs, said the family, who were bored by the out-of-date successes of Gwendolen Brogden in *Naughty Naughty*, or whatever junketing it might be which had been confected to titillate brief leaves from the Front. So Mrs. Carey sat in the ballroom and tinkled ineptly, wondering whether all old people had such trouble with their heart, and thinking how pleasant it is to be ill in comfort instead of sitting like the old women in the village in a kitchen which smelt of bad fruit and breath and geraniums ; and wondering how it had ever been thought suitable to go into the village with a gallipot ; and wondering why village sickness was ever supposed to be a rather charming herbal affair.

Henry and Anne she thought a dull couple, but sometimes Henry asked his friends to stay and Mrs. Carey was pleased to see that these sophisticated young people were delighted by her music. They used to stand round the piano after tea, to sing emphatically about Montenegro, and commend—not with the words she expected from the young, “spiffing” or “Ai”—with, “divine” and “fantastic.”

It will be a mercy, they said, if Mrs. Carey gets through the winter; and by saying so they killed her. For in the first days of October these words are being said whenever the aged leave the room, for a sign that the colours of a generation have become pale, that a new family life has closed round what had been an impulsive force, what is now—deprived of the apposite folding, the warm finish, of autumn—outside all movement, and therefore as good as dead.

She went to bed with one of the complaints which begin with an, “I think I’ll spend the morning in bed, Hermione; oh no, nothing at all—”

At the time when she died mists hung tightly round the house. From the cold cascade by the kitchen garden little of the house can be seen before eleven. Sometimes from the height of the woods alone appears the swelled and pinnacled dome glowing in the vapours. Beads of water lie on the conservatory roof and black patches of damp run in the sandstone walls. The hardy drive sixteen miles in an open Ford to a hunt-ball; to the golf umbrellas and croquet mallets in the summer-house a tennis net is added and a box of old balls, green as monstrous peas, which will be palmed off on the children—of whatever age—in the summer.

The park railings are wetter than ever, and now too frozen for a finger to bear to touch them. Leather gloves are always slipping-wet, or squeaking-wet on a rein; in the woods, wet long brambles curl themselves into an unravelled stocking and do their damndest. And from the slippery duckboards of the roof there is no view at all except of the low church tower and the ruined nails in the kitchen garden wall.

The intemperant cold turns the hermitages to iron and dyes the sandstone a metallic and patchy ochre. The paths are deserted, but over the beaded arms of bramble and the ugly boughs often a minaret pricks up, like the first view of an Indian memorial.

Mrs. Carey was dead, Albert, the groom, was disappointed about the hunting, Jock was disappointed about the chrysanthemums, and Stubb was offended at the closing of the carnation house. Henry and Anne went to hunt balls “because Granny would have liked us to,” and Lady Hermione was wondering whether John D. Wood or Knight, Frank and Rutley would sell the house the better for her.

There was now no reason to keep it; should she decide to keep it, a new range would be necessary and an independent hot water system. Then Mrs. McCann was always complaining about the linen cupboards and, what was worse, it cost far too much to mow the rides, and the horses seemed to eat so excessively that sometimes one wondered if Albert was quite honest. “I shall write to John D. Wood,” said Lady Hermione,

"and I shall buy a house in Cadogan Gardens. What is so nice about Willett houses is that they are all different.

And soon there appeared in *Country Life* the notice of a well-known county seat in a choice sporting and social district, with 37 or 45 bedrooms—45 if the house were bought for an increasing school, 38 if for economical family life, she supposed—three hours from London, convenient for the North, with a wealth of period fittings, and all for immediate inspection.

In February the crocuses moved in the slopes and there was great activity in the greenhouses, but inside the house, so soon as you went beyond the outer hall, you saw a terrible change made by uncarpeted stairs. A great table of coloured marbles and a pile of various fire-irons on a sheet were all that was left in the hall. Anne, in her bedroom on the second floor, deliberately enjoyed the silence. From the passage she could hear the creaks and scrapes of an emptying room below, but from her own seclusion she could hear nothing. She enjoyed the miniature security of someone in a walled and venerable garden at Romford or Gunnersbury, the security of being almost the last haven from an irresistible encroachment, of impressing upon her eyes for the last time the shapes of books, the ruffled head of a stuffed owl, the missing knob of a bedstead.

Henry, on the roof, watched the ragged winter lawns, the chilly fountains and wood-slopes the colour of wet tobacco, in which the mole-traps, too rusty to catch a mole, were nothing but lumps under the drifted leaves. Deeply he resented the ordinary appearance of the landscape, hopefully counted the things which interlopers would never notice.

Nobody would ever notice the swastika engraved by him once on the rotten seat among the rhododendrons, or see that the fallen slates of the stable roof had left a sort of H. Nobody would do this, nobody that. But he could imagine the interlopers.

"It's a lovely view, really it is."

"Look, Gladys, aren't those statues quaint?"

"Did you see the funny ruins?"

"Of course, we should have to do a great deal to the inside."

"Isn't that cunning!" ;

or a cool schoolmistress arranging for her charges ;

"—then we'll take out that stuff and paint the whole room a nice green."

"—such tasteful linos—"

"And mind, girls, no hockey if I catch anybody else on the roof."

Lady Hermione, to whom a house was a house, could be heard below, raising her voice in a matter of curtain-rings.

And in April the bees began to grumble over flowerless beds, the grass to lift a damp scent on sunny afternoons. There was nobody in the house but Mrs. McCann, no carpets to soften the geometric plates of sunlight when they fell on the floor. But the lustres were left hanging, and often the whitish April sun caught those heavy crystal blocks and started a liquid and coloured chase over the ceiling and over the walls in strips of

the elementary colours which are used for bottled sweets, so that the empty house was full of a silently adroit colour and movement which was equally like the changes of an aquarium or the magic rain of bonbons at a pantomime. And out of doors, although the beds were still bare, Colin was mending the choked pipes of the fountains, and chasing the frogs out of the elusive crannies in which the taps of the fountains had been hidden—for the taps of fountains are never in an easy place, but under a pile of artificial rocks, among the roots of a beech-tree, or in one of those sweating excavations where nothing can be seen, where there is scarcely room for a grown-up arm, plunged to the elbow, to find the wheel which starts the water.

One day Mr. Thomas Ample came, whose father had acquired an immense fortune out of transporting slaves at so much a head from one part of Liberia to another under the promise of better conditions or even of eventual freedom ; and very shortly afterwards it became known, although nobody had written it exactly, that Mr. Ample was buying Larkfield, and that he had lost his wife in a trade dispute, and that he had a son and a daughter, and that he ought to be honoured by the Liberal Party.

In May Mr. Ample came for good. Stubb was not more excited by this coming than by the successful persuasion of a begonia into the greenhouse, and Jock was not excited because there was the oiling of the motor mower to be done and because the strawberry nets had been miserably eaten by rats. There ought not to be rats, he was told. But there are rats. Then why leave the nets where they can be got at, you damn fool ?

William Ample and his sister, not a bad couple, were despised for asking questions. It seemed extraordinary that they did not know the way to certain chapels and village halls of the neighbourhood, or which was Ackroyd's, or which Tillotson's, or even the sinuous geography of the garden. It was put about by Jock that William did not so much as know the snaffle from the curb, and when he was found to ride extremely well it was put about that he could do nothing better than gallivant on horseback in outlandish places. Rose had arrived in stockings of Lisle thread, they declared, and did not know which arm to offer going in to dinner. It was a lucky thing, they said, that she no longer ate with a chopstick. But soon somebody discovered that the late Mrs. Ample had been the daughter of a lord, a Scot certainly, a mere life peer, but of enough importance to allow Mr. Ample's valet a better place among those who had been servants to Lady Hermione.

And quite suddenly, before summer was well in, everybody knew that the changes at Larkfield were not important, just as Mrs. Carey's death had not been important, for both of her and of Lady Hermione they said that she had been a lady such as was not often seen, but without regret, without comparison.

Quite suddenly new ways became ancient ; the same wages were paid in the same way ; housemaids quarrelled neither more nor less ; the neighbours went up to London for a fortnight's polish at Brown's Hotel and returned

with complaints of the traffic. Slowly the house, which had been a house became a period, or several periods ; the minarets became remarkable, every sort of thing was noticed for the first time. Even the servants were half-expected to find the dome amusing, and visitors who were taken across the lake were shown the house not for its size but for its oddity.

Nowadays, when you said " Larkfield," you did not mean the grotesque house where poor Hermione was stuffed up all the year, where the gardens were delicious, although nothing surely could make up for the winters ; you meant that divinely crazy place which the Amples have really made rather marvellous.

The changes at Larkfield were quite unimportant so long as this month was the month for bedding out, that month the month for clipping, that week the earliest hope of raspberries, next week a difficult time with the roses. For to the houses of this degree the owners are unimportant ; what is important is the morning views and the stolid labours of the garden, the small landscapes of crow's-flight and mole-run which combine into the human landscape, and the sequences of colour and season and moderate duty, and the conquest of weeds in the drive, of badgers in the reeds below the sawmill.

Different racquets are flung down in the rustic houses ; and pieces of green, like natural baize, have worked up into the Latin of the Quiberon monument. But the park railings are as wet, as rough ; the polished green of a minaret strikes up as brightly among the limes ; and the almost unbelievable, the plentiful, the vivacious, peace of the country enjoys a Mr. Ample as well as a Lady Hermione.

On a summer evening, a Sunday, William Ample went up to the roof and watched the sun, still intact, fall on a Clio among the trees, on the glinting stone of the ornamental bridge, and the wide-open flowers, at whose roots were pools of water where Colin had been watering. The trees were never gayer, the dry fountains never more warmly dusty. Just as Anne had revelled in the quiet of her room because of the noise outside, William revelled in the garden quiet because of a sifted noise from the main road. The village was in church, and from the church he heard the imperfect and drawling movement of a hymn :

The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended ;

The evening and the sweetness of the air made it seem rather touching.

The darkness falls—

they sang, but the darkness had not yet begun to fall on the park. Every channel of the trees' bark was lightened or blackened by the clear light. The singing faltered or picked up ; the sun did not seem to move, nor anybody to move except a servant in the desultory preparation of dinner.

" I am ashamed," said William nearly aloud, for he knew that no one could possibly hear, " neither of my religion nor of my country," and he thought what an odd thing it was to say.

## ONE DAY

By H. M.

MISS BARTLETT splashed the last drops from the grape-fruit over the front of her green linen dress, wiped the spots with her table-napkin and looked up as Mohammed, a wall-eyed, pock-marked and eternally smiling Libyan entered the room. He carried a boiled egg and a milk jug in one hand, a teapot in the other, and a toast-rack filled with burnt toast perilously swinging from his crooked little finger.

"Good morning, most gracious one," said Mohammed, letting the toast-rack go on to the table with a clatter that brought the toast jumping out of its compartments.

"Good morning," replied Miss Bartlett in Arabic, and continued with a frown—"Where is the tray?"

"The tray, gracious lady?"

"Yes, the tray. Why dost thou not use it? The tray."

"Ah, the tray!" A light dawned in the wall eye. "The *tray* . . ." and he darted from the room to reappear a moment later with the new copper tray that she had bought in the Mousky last month.

"A-ho!" said Mohammed (meaning "Behold!"), as he proudly extended it towards her. But Miss Bartlett, too busy with the egg to enter into further explanations, merely said:

"In three minutes I want an arabeyah."

"Haadur."

"Choose one with good, swift horses."

"Haadur."

"Neither old nor lame, but swift and strong if thou canst find them."

"Haadur."

"For I am late—"

"Allah!" (in protest).

"Therefore I give thee three minutes—no more."

He was gone. Hastily Miss Bartlett swallowed her breakfast. She took her third cup of tea over to the window to finish, and stood a moment looking out over the roof tops stretching away and away to the citadel . . . and then the desert wall itself shining palely through the early morning mist. It was April in Cairo, and all as she had seen it a hundred times, but surely never had it looked so utterly lovely, so Arabian Nightish. What enchantment was it that made her hold her breath and stare, and suddenly, inexplicably, want to cry. . . .?

Miss Bartlett turned abruptly into her bedroom, pushed her pale hair under a large straw hat, gathered up a pile of exercise books and hurried to the front door where Mohammed was waiting respectfully. She handed the exercise books to him and walked ahead down the stone stairs. Mohammed followed with the books under his right arm; with his left

hand he held up the folds of his long dressing-gown-like garment, revealing a pair of purple sock suspenders, blue socks, and gigantic yellow shoes, many sizes too large for him. The socks belonged to Miss Bartlett's brother, on leave in England : he devoutly prayed that she would not recognise them.

"The arabeyah—a most splendid arabeyah—waits below, honoured lady."

"This is the fifth time that thou hast called me a full half-hour late."

"Allah forbid—"

"The fifth time, I say—"

"No, your honour—"

"Five times. I have said it. Dost thou think that the Minister of Education is made to wait upon thy beauty sleep ? Is it not a shame upon thee that I am thus late at the College ? Now listen : the next time that thou neglectest to awaken me, the expenses of the arabeyah to Saida Zeinab shall be deducted from thy salary. Hast thou understood ? "

Mohammed gurgled in an ingratiating manner and handed the pile of exercise books up to her as she took her seat in the rickety carriage.

"And forget not that I am exceedingly angered. Lunch at 1.30, by which be it understood that I require lunch at 1.30 and not at 2 o'clock."

"Yes, your honour," said Mohammed, his face disintegrating into the most disarming of smiles, and to the driver he cried :

"Hasten, thou son of a dog. Hast thou not heard the gracious one's words ? To the Government College at Saida Zeinab with all speed ! Allah ! Thou knowest it not ? Did thy mother deprive thee of thy wits at birth ? Learn, O Father of imbecility. . . ."

At this point Miss Bartlett cut him short.

"Go straight on," she said, and, as the driver cracked his whip and the miserable, half-starved horses broke into a shambling trot, she settled herself back to enjoy the quarter of an hour's drive through the still, quiet streets.

It was nearly twenty minutes to eight: the sun poured on to the shuttered windows, the deserted balconies of the European houses ; but below, in the shadow of the trees that lined the avenue, it was cool—almost cold. The distances were very blue. Miss Bartlett shivered and enjoyed the shiver, and thought how, in six hours' time, she would be returning along this very street, hot, dusty and tired—horribly tired after half a day spent vainly striving to maintain some semblance of order among her unruly students. This was her fourth year in the Egyptian Government Service. She remembered how she had started out with strict ideas on discipline, on maintaining standards, on the value of examinations. She thought of the first "strike" that she had experienced—she was teaching then at a government school in the delta, and the occasion for the demonstration was the murder of the Sirdar. She remembered how the children had gathered in groups in the playground, shouting abuse that she did not understand, and throwing stones at their classroom windows. It had gone

on for three days. At the end of that time most of them were as hoarse as crows and some were quite dumb from the shouting. Periodically the frailer ones were sick from the sun and the hysteria. She remembered helping to carry two of her worst enemies into the matron's room to revive them. On the fourth day the strike had mysteriously ended. It was not that the children had had enough, or that their beautiful militant spirit was broken. They had received a secret message from Cairo, from their beloved "Saadi Basha.\*" Saad Pasha had said "Strike," and Saad Pasha now said: "Stop striking and return to your work," and they obeyed his commands. She remembered how they had filed in from the playground in an orderly fashion and smiled cheerfully at her as they passed, saying "Good morneeng, Mees Bartlett," in their exhausted voices, just as if nothing at all had happened. She remembered her ridiculous rage; how she had gone to the Head, protesting: "Are they to receive no punishment for their behaviour? Am I required to go on teaching them as before? . . ." How green she had been then! . . . She was not like that now. She welcomed strikes. They gave her an opportunity to catch up with her arrears of corrections, to write letters home, to read a novel from the circulating library. The students didn't strike nearly often enough for Miss Bartlett now.

"Yeminak,†" she cried, and the driver swung round to the right at her command so abruptly that the exercise books at her feet slithered over and nearly fell into the road. She piled them up with her foot. The arabeyah had penetrated into a maze of native streets. It was a short cut she knew of.

And then there was that matter of the examinations. She remembered how, in the innocence of her first year, she had failed a few of her pupils in the final examination—a few—just the genuinely mentally deficient ones—for she was kind-hearted and would have passed them if she could. She remembered how she had disregarded the Head's protest and how she had received an order from the Ministry to hold "supplementary examinations" for the mental defectives. It had been a shock, and it had delayed her going home on leave in the hot weather—but she learned her lesson from it. Now she knew better: she never failed anyone at all. And the result was that the Ministry Inspector congratulated her each year on her splendid results. It was all very simple. . . .

Mechanically she ordered the driver to turn to the left. It was no good giving an arabeyah driver an address, for he never remembered it long enough to arrive at the destination required—one always said "Left," "Right," and "Straight on" until one arrived. And Mohammed knew that very well; but then Mohammed was just showing off this morning—how he loved showing off. . . . She would have to get rid of him. He was lazy, inefficient, incurably unpunctual and *how* amiable. She liked him—but he'd have to go. One of these days he'd get her into serious trouble by

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\*Saad Pasha Zaghloul, liberator of Egypt and the school-children's hero.

†To the right in Arabic.

waking her late in the morning. Probably this very day there'd be an inspector there—just her luck. . . . O damn Mohammed.

The arabeyah was rolling along a street where rich pashas dwelt. To the right and left their big, showy villas stood in dried-up gardens. The street was planted with gold mohrs just breaking into flame against a turquoise sky. In the corner of a garden, a naked boy squatted beside a small fire of his own making. Miss Bartlett smelled the blue wood smoke and glanced at the early gold mohr blossoms and the morning sky. "How lovely," she breathed, and felt the unaccountable tears spring to her eyes again. And she thought for the second time of the Arabian Nights and dimly sensed that there was magic in the air, that this was a day on which things happened.

The driver turned into a wide maidan, the meeting-place of several streets. He turned so sharply that the pile of books upset once more, but Miss Bartlett, with a quick movement of her foot, prevented the topmost one from falling into the road. She looked at the name on the book—Dowlat Hanna, Fourth Year—in the neat, back-sloping hand-writing that she detested. Dowlat Hanna, eighteen, excessively intelligent, impudent, crafty, and with an uncanny command of the English language—she *would* be first always. Dowlat was a Copt, and loved to draw Miss Bartlett (who was no ardent Christian) into a discussion of the demerits of the Mohammedan religion. Miss Bartlett had hated the girl ever since the day when she had come upon her in out-of-school hours, sitting in the library reading ahead of the work set her in order to trip up her teacher with embarrassing questions in class. (Miss Bartlett herself only read up her subject one day ahead of the class.) Since when her dislike had been tinged also with fear. She kicked the exercise book, to show what she thought of Dowlat Hanna, and glanced anxiously at her watch, the ecstasy of a moment already forgotten.

The maidan, which an hour later would be crowded with chattering pedestrians, beggars, carts and trams, was deserted save for two fellaheen in faded blue robes, who were walking towards the shady island in the centre, and a sleepy native policeman who was emerging from a side street to take up his position on this island, safely out of reach of the unregulated Cairene traffic. Miss Bartlett's carriage approached the two fellaheen. She noticed that one walked behind the other and was speaking in a low voice, while the other went on without listening. Suddenly—she was almost abreast with them now—the one that followed drew an enormous curved knife from the folds of his garment, seized his companion by the shoulder, and, dragging him round, stabbed him several times in the stomach. Miss Bartlett felt her heart stand still. The murdered man uttered no sound, but put his hands to the wounds as though to press back the blood that already stained his robe. Slowly he swayed round in a semi-circle, fell against the steps of the arabeyah as it swerved away from him, and bumped off on to the ground. Miss Bartlett stood up and looked back. There he lay in the dust, rolling his eyeballs. She saw, to her amazement,

that his entrails protruded from the blue and crimson robe, and glistened in the sun. She thought, "And his bowels gushed out. . . ." She tried to scream, but no sound came. She saw the murderer disappearing down a side street. Along an adjacent street the policeman, who had also witnessed the scene, was now discreetly vanishing.

Suddenly she found her voice.

"Stop!" she screamed to the driver. "Stop! Stop! Look!"

But he was whipping up his horses as though ten thousand devils were after him, and calling on the Prophet to witness that he had not seen what he had seen, and Miss Bartlett realised that he, no less than the policeman, had no wish to be in any way associated with the crime.

She sank back on the seat. Her heart was now beating wildly. She had witnessed a murder in the broad daylight in a public square. But she felt no fear or horror, no urge to report the matter to the police, no desire even to know the reason for the crime. She felt only that odd wave of ecstasy more strongly than before, and rejoiced, as hundreds and thousands of years ago her ancestors had rejoiced, in slaughter. Crimson and lapis lazuli and something that gleamed iridescent in the sun. . . . This was more beautiful than the roof-tops and the desert wall and the gold mohr and the blue wood smoke. She closed her eyes and put her hand to her breast to still the frenzied beating of her heart. "I knew this was no ordinary day," she whispered to herself. "And his bowels really did gush out," she said.

The arabeyah was slowing down at the steps of the College—so he knew the way after all, thought Miss Bartlett, wondering if this new happiness was written in her face. Only then did she notice that Dowlat Hanna's exercise book was not on top of the pile. It was not anywhere. . . . Of course, it must have fallen out when the arabeyah swerved. Yes that must be it. Well, who cared? She didn't.

As she fumbled in her purse for the right coins, she observed a smart two-seater car cross the road and pull up alongside the steps, behind the arabeyah.

"Good morning, Miss Bartlett!" exclaimed a voice. "What on earth brings you to these parts?" And a tall young man, very handsome in his military uniform, climbed out of the car and stood beside her.

"Hullo," she replied and continued with a casual ease that astonished her (for she mixed little in Cairo society, and was usually tongue-tied and diffident.) "O, it's you! What am I doing here? Why this is where I teach my little coloured sisters to appreciate the pearls of English literature."

"I say! You don't mean it? Sounds awfully brainy, what? May I help with those books?"

"O, thanks," she continued in the new airy manner, and threw him what she felt to be a dazzling smile. "And what, may I ask, are you doing in this quarter?"

"I stopped the night with a fellow out at Maadi—chap called Parker, d'you know him? No? And I'm on my way in to G.H.Q. Luck my

meeting you, though—I've often wondered how to get on to you—you're so dashed elusive. . . ."

Miss Bartlett had met Captain Cunningham (Geoff. Cunningham she remembered they called him) at a party she had been asked to with her brother—it was not the sort of party she usually attended, being of a higher social grade than the one to which she belonged. He had been charming to her and she had thought him violently attractive—which, along his own lines, he was. Not unnaturally, she had resented it rather that he never appeared to recognise her afterwards at the Sporting Club where she had seen him about, but it was only a dim resentment, for it was some years since she had had any particular attention paid to her, and she was resigned to it. But now she felt no surprise at this sudden change: this was her day, and she knew it.

"O, I'm always about," she replied. "A little here and a little there—the usual places, you know." (And she wanted to say: "By the way, I've just seen a man murdered. . . ." But instead, she smiled at him again.)

"I say would you dine one of these nights?"

"Love to. Take those books for me, Abdu," she added in Arabic to the door-keeper, who was holding the front door open for her: they had reached the top of the steps.

"And what about a spot of dancing? Is there any place you prefer? I'm a bit off Shepheard's—too many dagos, what?"

"Yes, there are rather," she agreed, remembering that it was three years at Christmas since she had last danced at Shepheard's. "Well, good-bye, I must be off."

"O, hold on a minute. You're not in such a hurry, are you?"

"Well, rather a hurry." She was thinking how classes had begun ten, perhaps twelve, minutes ago, and here she was loitering on the door-step, and she saw a look of mild astonishment on the door-keeper's face.

"Go along, Abdu," she said in Arabic. "Take those books to my class-room, quickly."

"I say! You *can* speak the language." Captain Cunningham was all admiration. "But listen. Where'll I get hold of you? You on the telephone?"

"O, you'll see me at the Club, I expect," said Miss Bartlett lightly, without admitting that she had no telephone.

"At the Club? Right. I'll be on the look-out."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

As she crossed the big, deserted hall she glanced at the clock that hung on the wall between a large photograph of Lord Cromer and a larger oil painting of King Fuad. One minute to eight . . . it was later than she had thought. She threw her hat on a peg, examined her time-table, and, taking up a few text books, made her way towards her class-room at the far end of a big interior courtyard. There was no mistaking her room: the uproar that came from it was terrific. So they were enjoying themselves

waiting for her ; they had not reported her absence ; the Head was unaware of her lateness. Well, not that it mattered in the least—

Thirty-six pairs of eyes fastened on her as she entered the room. A small minority struggled to their feet in respectful silence ; the vast majority babbled on in Arabic :

“ Fifteen minutes late ! . . . Ya Salaam ! Is this an example to set before us ? . . . Let us report it to the Ministry. . . . No, to-morrow *we* shall be fifteen minutes late. . . . Better still, forty minutes, then we will have no literature lesson. . . . ”

A voice spoke in English : “ Mees Bartlett, allow me to alterr the classroom clock. Eet ith at least feefteen minutes in advance of your arrival. Eet ith a very bad, inaccurate clock.”

Laughter greeted this sally. Miss Bartlett stood a moment gazing at the desk before her. Crimson and blue . . . a knife that flashed in the sun. . . . She thought, “ I’ll do some grammar with them to-day : I’ll give them a simple sentence—‘ and his bowels gushed out’—what part of speech is ‘ out ’ ? . . . ”

A figure had approached the desk. It was the odious Dowlat Hanna.

“ Miss Bartlett—these girls—” she leered up at her, “ I endeavour to keep them quiet for you—but they are, you know—”

“ Sit down.” She was amazed at the new authoritative ring of her voice. So apparently was Dowlat. So was the rest of the class. There was a lull as Dowlat slunk back to her desk.

“ Sit down and shut up, the lot of you.” *What ? Had she spoken those words ?* Was it possible that she, Marjorie Bartlett, had shouted in that sergeant-major’s voice ? If one of them laughed, it would be all up—she’d lose her nerve. But the class, startled into respectful silence, was very far from laughing.

“ I have here your compositions to return to you,” she continued after a suitable pause. “ They are an extraordinarily uninteresting collection. While I do not expect very much from you as a class, I shall require a higher level of work in future. The best of a poor lot is”—and she held up the first from the pile to have a look at the name on the cover—“ is Mufida Tewfik’s. Take it away, Mufida.”

To Dowlat Hanna, sitting scowling at her desk, it was as if the heavens had fallen. She could not remember the day when she had not been first in composition. She wrote English far better than any other student in the class—and they all knew it. It is true that she had not wasted much time on this particular composition, but the subject—“ The Uses of Leisure ”—had seemed too easy, hardly worth bothering about. Mufida Tewfik, fat, stupid and painstaking, waddled up for her essay, and shot her a triumphant glance as she returned to her desk. Dowlat decided that, when summoned, she would show Miss Bartlett what she thought of her. But she was not summoned. Miss Bartlett was handing back the essays, one after another, with caustic comments. At the eighth, Dowlat threw up her hands, shrugged her shoulders, and muttered disrespectfully in Arabic.

"And as to you, Dowlat Hanna," came Miss Bartlett's imperious tones, "what is the reason that I have no composition to return to you?"

"But, Miss Bartlett, I—"

"No, I will not listen to any excuses."

"But—"

"Be silent. You shall write me a composition this afternoon when school is over. If your book is lost, you shall buy a new one. And now I don't wish to hear any more about it."

Burning with rage at this monstrous injustice, Dowlat opened her mouth and closed it again before Miss Bartlett's icy stare. Some of the class tittered. They all hated this smug, insolent Copt and rejoiced in her humiliation. Miss Bartlett felt the wave of approbation, and continued with the task of handing back the essays. Her comments became kinder. Inside her a voice was saying: "*You can't . . . it isn't possible* that you have done this thing . . . and what if the exercise book finds its way back to the college, and it is discovered that you did receive it, did correct it . . . O, God . . . it means ruin. . . ." But the new Miss Bartlett replied to herself: "Well done. You've put that damned girl in her place at last. And if the book is handed in, you can destroy it. . . . None shall know. . . . That was well done!"

The lesson—during what little time remained for it—was a phenomenal success. Miss Bartlett spoke like one inspired, and the class, including the wounded Dowlat, answered her questions with alacrity. Towards the end—those last five minutes when they invariably fidgetted and whispered together—she could see that they were regarding her with open admiration. She warmed towards them. When the bell went, they clicked their tongues in annoyance, manifestly grieved at the interruption. As she was passing out, a small, dark, fuzzy-haired girl to whom she had never paid much attention, hurriedly produced from her desk a bunch of dying roses that she brought daily for her botany teacher, whom she loved with a great passion. She pressed them shyly into Miss Bartlett's hands. Miss Bartlett thanked her graciously and rewarded her with her dazzling smile—the smile she had bestowed on Captain Cunningham. In that instant the girl transferred all her allegiance to Miss Bartlett, who walked away, followed by admiring glances.

As she entered the staff room, she encountered Doris Blake—thin, earnest, painfully unattractive, and four years her junior.

"Hullo, Bartlett, who's been crowning you with flowers? I say, you were awfully late this morning weren't you?"

"And how does that affect you?" replied the new Miss Bartlett, but she softened her retort with the smile. Then she added, "Look here, I'll tell you something—"

"What?"

She was going to say—"I saw a man murdered, not an hour ago"—but no, not that. That was her secret—the secret of this day that was like no other day—her secret vision that had changed her from a drab school-

teacher into a woman all-powerful and charming. She would share it with no one, for no one would, or could, understand it. So instead she said :

"O, nothing. . . ."

"O, go on, tell me—"

"No, really, it wasn't anything at all. There's the bell ! "

"Yes, blast it, and I've got forty solid minutes of those ghastly Fourths. I don't know how to stand the little ticks."

"I've just had 'em," said Miss Bartlett, "and they're a very good class."

"They're *what* ? "

"I like 'em : they're fun. It's just a matter of handling, you know." With which remark she sailed off to her next class.

The morning was one long triumph for Miss Bartlett. She repeated her successes with each class. At a quarter to one, during the last lesson—a period when she was usually drooping with fatigue and wondering how to last out till lunch time—she sat back to dream, having set the class work to do. She gazed over their bent heads and thought of rubies and lapis lazuli—a necklace of rubies and lapis lazuli—that was what she must have—the ancient Egyptians . . . they knew. . . . A servant appeared in the doorway to say that she was wanted on the telephone. She shook off her thoughts and walked out without even troubling to enjoin silence—it was not necessary. Wanted on the telephone . . . but who ? No one ever telephoned her at the college (the Head discouraged the habit among the staff), no one but her brother, and he, of course, was in England.

"Hullo."

"Hullo. Is that Miss Bartlett ? " It was Captain Cunningham's voice.

"Speaking."

"This is Geoff. Cunningham. I say, I hope I'm not disturbing you ? "

"O, not at all." (Gone the commanding tones. This was the airy voice of the new Miss Bartlett, the gay, casual, social one, the one who despised Shephard's.)

"I say, I know I haven't much hope, asking you at the last minute like this, but I wondered if by any chance you were free and would come and dine and dance out at Mena ? "

"To-night ? "

"Yes. Do say you will."

"What is to-night ? O, Thursday, of course. D'you know I can't remember a thing I'm doing. Do hold on a minute will you, while I take a look."

"Rather."

She put down the receiver and strolled away to allow suitable time to elapse to look into an imaginary engagement book. When she picked up the instrument again her hand was trembling, but she spoke steadily.

"You there ? "

"Yes. Any luck ? "

"I'd love to."

"O, good. That's perfectly splendid! I'll come for you about eight, shall I? Where is it?" She gave him the address and he repeated it slowly after her, and added: "At about eight then?"

"Marvellous."

"It will be for me!"

She laughed. "Well, good-bye," she said.

"Good-bye, till to-night."

As she walked back to the class-room, her eyes were shining—she had suddenly become almost beautiful. She was thinking—"I am going out to-night with one of the most popular, certainly the most handsome, young men in Cairo. Every week I see his name in the *Sphinx*—polo, of course, that's it, he's a great polo player. He goes everywhere, knows everyone, and yes—he is very attractive. Two days ago I saw him driving by with that girl who's staying at the Residency—Paula Something-or-other—her picture was in the *Sphinx*, too. I expect she's in love with him. I expect dozens of women are. And yet he's chosen—for this evening, at any rate, he's chosen me. . . ."

It was only when the bell rang for end of school that she realised that she had no dress for the occasion. Both her evening dresses were made-overs from previous years. No matter; she would go shopping that afternoon. She rushed back to the staff room, sending Abdu out for an arabayah. She usually took the tram home from motives of economy—the stuffy mid-day tram, where she would sit for twenty miserable minutes, squeezed between a fat and smelly sheikh and some smellier native woman, wrapped in dusty, black rags. But not so to-day. She hurried out for fear of having to offer a lift to other members of the staff. As she drove across the now crowded maidan, she looked anxiously for traces of the morning's adventure—some blood in the dust. There was no sign. She closed her eyes to reconstruct the scene, and sat back smiling happily to herself.

Mohammed opened the door of the flat to her. At sight of him, she felt a wave of affection, such as one has for a favourite dog. She wanted to take off his tarbush and pat his crinkly head. If he had not made her late, she would have missed her murder, and missed Captain Cunningham, and all her lovely day would never have been. Dear Mohammed—and to think that she had spoken harshly to him. In a burst of repentance, she took 25 piastres from her purse.

"Mohammed. After lunch, I would have thee go forth and buy flowers—no matter what variety—an abundance of flowers, in order to make beautiful this room. What money remaineth, keep thou for thyself."

The Libyan retired, profuse in his thanks. Once in his kitchen, he called Allah to witness that these women of the English were indeed of a most pitiable madness. Did she not this very morning threaten to fine him for his unpunctuality? And was she not, even now, giving him 25 piastres wherewith to buy flowers—flowers which she knew she could herself purchase for 10 piastres (and Allah forbid that he should spend more than 5 on them). And this without so much as asking whether lunch were

punctual—which indeed it was not, for he had barely begun to make preparations for it. Twenty-five piastres. . . . Elhamdulillah !

In spite of the heat, Miss Bartlett went forth to shop immediately after lunch. She went to one of the big European department stores and found her way to the evening dresses.

“Je désire,” she said in her correct, but uncolloquial French, “une robe de soirée, bleu et rouge, en couleurs de rubis et lapis bleu de Perse.” The attendant was bewildered. Never had she heard of such a gown, but she would show Madame what she had : the very latest modes and of an exceptional chic. . . . She produced a variety of conventional, insipid blues and pinks. Miss Bartlett only shook her head and sighed.

“Bleu et rouge,” she repeated.

After she had tried three of these establishments, she felt a momentary wave of discouragement. And then it came to her in a flash. She was going the wrong way about it. She must go, of course, to a select and exquisite salon, catering only for the richer tourists—the Marquise Flora in Kasr-El-Nil (branches in Paris and Monte Carlo). There she would find it. . . . The arabeyah—her sixth that day—drew up outside Flora’s beautiful, modernistic window, which exhibited one diaphanous nightdress of great beauty and impracticability, one necklace of grey pearls as big as eggs, and a toy camel made of glass. Miss Bartlett had never been into a shop of this nature before. The Marquise Flora herself advanced to meet her, and said at once : “But perfectly, Madame. I shall show you a dress of sapphire—*enfin c’est le même bleu, voyons—sapphire net, with a crimson necklace and crimson slippers with sapphire buckles . . . a véritable rêve d’amour . . . it is the very thing that Madame desires.*” And it was. The enchanting outfit was promised for the evening.

“And Madame must pay good attention to her lips . . . to match her shoes and necklace, *hein ?* I have for Madame the correct lip-stick . . . *vrai couleur de sang.* . . .”

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Captain Cunningham didn’t think much of the place where she lived. He didn’t care for the smell on the dark, stone stairs ; he didn’t fancy the smiling, wall-eyed Mohammed, and he wasn’t impressed by the shabby little sitting-room, heavy with the scent of stocks.

Mohammed, in voluble Arabic, presented the gracious lady’s compliments, begged his honour to be seated, and to be good enough to refresh himself with a cocktail.

“Search me,” said Captain Cunningham, turning away to adjust his flawless white tie in a square of mirror on the wall.

But Mohammed knew his cue, for Miss Bartlett had, with infinite patience, rehearsed him in his part. He shuffled over to the cocktails in order to draw attention to them, and stood there smiling with an eager gesture of invitation.

“O—er—I see—good—thanks,” said Captain Cunningham, turning round, and this very moment Miss Bartlett elected to enter the room.

"Hullo! Hope I'm not too early. I say, you're looking wonderful. What a—what a—perfectly marvellous frock—absolutely—"

"This one? Glad you like it. Have a cocktail, will you?"

And as they stood together by the moonlit window, sipping their cocktails and chatting casually, Captain Cunningham was enchanted: he had every reason to be, for Miss Bartlett was—for the first time during her twenty-nine and a half years of life—altogether enchanting.

During the long drive out to Mena they spoke little. It was sheer loveliness to feel the cool night air, to see the moonlit fields rushing past, the ghostly pyramids drawing nearer. He was thinking of the look on Paula Cleveland's face when she saw him dancing with—with—Bartlett—she must have another name. Paula was all right—damned attractive, in fact—but spoiled and grasping. . . . Same with all the girls in Cairo . . . it went to their heads. "Teach Paula a lesson to-night . . . wish I'd thought of it before. . . ." And he smiled and squeezed Miss Bartlett's hand; and Miss Bartlett, who couldn't know his thoughts, returned the smile and the squeeze.

Arrived at Mena House, she hastened to the ladies' cloak-room to rid herself of her shabby evening cloak. When she emerged, followed by the admiring eyes of the cloak room attendant (who had mentally labelled her as an important foreign visitor, an English milady), she was met by Captain Cunningham, who, in the long corridor leading to the great Moorish dining-room, contrived to get on to Christian name terms with her, and when she took her seat at the most conspicuous table in the room, and a couple of hundred diners stopped masticating to take a look at her, while waiters fought with one another to adjust her chair—then, then, she knew that her cup of happiness was full.

The dinner was long and superlatively good. The hotel orchestra played and replayed a tango, by special request of a party of millionaire Greeks, who sat at an adjoining table, casting languorous glances over Captain Cunningham's back at Miss Bartlett's front. She could not understand, but thought that she could guess what they were saying—in point of fact she was wrong there. . . .

"D'you really like it, Marjorie—teaching Gyppos, I mean?"

"O, it gives me something to do."

"And I suppose you're full of degrees and things—frightfully brainy, I mean to say, what?" She smiled and shook her head, and he continued, "Well, I never saw anything at all like you that came out of a women's college before—fact."

She knew this for a compliment, and laughed. The hotel orchestra was giving way to an American band.

"Thank God, we can dance now," said Captain Cunningham, and they led the way on to the dance floor.

Dancing with him was divine. She had been afraid, a little nervous of her inexperience, but, after the first few steps she knew that there was nothing to fear. She moved on winged feet. She was like a deep blue flame with

flashes of crimson. Through half-closed eyes she saw the huge room revolving round her—lights and noise and a blurr of faces, whirling, whirling. . . . She was drunk, divinely drunk—but on the champagne, or on the dance—which? She felt his arm tighten round her, and closed her eyes in ecstasy, abandoning herself to the rhythm of the dance. This, this was heaven. . . . Not for nothing was Captain Cunningham known as the best dancer in Cairo.

“Hullo, Geoff!”

“O, hullo, Paula. . . .”

She was aware of a slim, fair-haired, sun-burned girl in white, dancing with a bald young man, who wore an eye-glass and a disarranged white tie, into which what little there was of his chin receded. The girl stared at Miss Bartlett, and Miss Bartlett returned the stare and recognised the face she had seen in the *Sphinx*. They were lost in the crowd and Miss Bartlett, returning to Heaven, straightway forgot them.

“Darling, that was marvellous,” said Captain Cunningham, as the music stopped at last. “Let’s go out and get a breath of fresh air.”

He led her on to the great carved wooden balcony, overlooking the moonlit garden and the Nile valley beyond. There he drew her to him and kissed her, but gently, and skilfully, so as not to disarrange her hair, smudge her lipstick (*couleur de sang*), or leave any traces of the proceeding on his dress coat.

In the hour that followed, Miss Bartlett was often conscious of the eyes of the girl in white. She shouted remarks to Captain Cunningham whenever they passed; so did the men she was with; so did many others of both sexes. Miss Bartlett knew no one, except two tables of elderly government officials, who sat against the walls with their women-folk, looking very bored and out of it.

“Come and have a drink with us.” It was the bald young man without a chin. He screwed his eye-glass into his pale green eye, gave Miss Bartlett a glance of approval, and led the way to their table. She heard Captain Cunningham say—“D’you know each other? Miss Cleveland—Miss Bartlett . . . Captain Langdon-Wright—Squadron-Leader Morris. . . .”

“What’ll you have?” said the eye-glass, and she heard herself agreeing to Captain Cunningham’s suggestion of “brandy-and-soda, Marjorie, dear . . .” and she hoped that it would be all right.

“Are you just out?” asked Miss Cleveland. “I think Cairo’s fun don’t you?”

“Yes, quite,” said Miss Bartlett, smiling and ignoring her first question. Captain Cunningham, she saw, had disappeared.

“My dear, your dress is too divine—I couldn’t take my eyes off it. Did you know Geoff at home?” continued Miss Cleveland, blowing out a cloud of cigarette smoke, and leaning her lovely amber-coloured arms on the table.

“O, no.”

Miss Cleveland looked surprised, even annoyed. She disgorged a

second cloud. "Anyway he *can* dance—I'll say just that for him," she remarked cryptically.

"Yes—really too beautifully," agreed Miss Bartlett in languid tones, and turned her attention to the eye-glass.

In the gentlemen's lavatory Captain Cunningham was greeted by a friend. "Who's the Serpent of old Nile?"

"Which?"

"The one you've brought along to-night."

"She's a Miss Bartlett, if you want to know."

"A good-looker and no mistake. Is she just out?"

"No, she lives here."

"You don't say so—never saw her before."

"Yes, old boy. Teaches little niggers for the fun of the thing."

"You *don't* say so! A school teacher, what? They weren't like that in my time, my boy. Wish I was at the ruddy school. . . ."

As Captain Cunningham returned to the table the band struck up a tune in which they felt they could really let themselves go. They had taken it to their hearts at the beginning of the season and played it with increasing feeling every night since.

"*Sweeee . . . Child,*" crooned the saxophonist in liquid tones,  
*Your drivin' me wild.*

*That's puttin' it mild, sweeee . . . child. Ah'm wild about you."*

"Same old ghastly tunes," said Miss Cleveland, putting her hands to her ears, only a second before Miss Bartlett was going to remark: "I *adore* this tune." She felt that she had just been saved from disaster, and turned to see Captain Cunningham extending a hand to her and saying, "Marjorie? Dance?" in a wholly secret and confidential tone of voice which was not wasted on Miss Cleveland.

This time the floor flew round at an alarming rate. It must be the brandy. She did hope it was going to be all right.

"*Sayeee . . . wen,*" pleaded the saxophonist—  
*You gotta sayee wen.*

*Then say it agen, Sweee . . . Child, Ah'm wild about you."*

She did so hope it was going to be all right. She was feeling giddy and faint and losing control over her legs . . .

"Geoff—do you think—could we sit down a bit?"

"Darling, of course, are you tired?"

"A little. . . ."

He manœuvred their way through the crush to their table. She sat down. Two small drums were beating in her temples. This was awful.

"Have a drink?"

"Yes, please, water—"

"Water? What for? I say, you aren't feeling ill, are you?"

"No, of course not. Just tired and a bit hot. I'd love some cold water."

To the waiter he said, "Two brandies, and one water with some ice in it. Quick. D'you understand? Then get on with it. . . ."

Then he held her hand under the table and she felt a little better, and, when the water came, she drank some and felt much better.

"Now some of this." He pushed the brandy towards her. She shook her head.

"But this is just what you need, darling. Trust me, I know what's best. Try just a sip—" And as he leaned towards her with his quick, beautiful smile, she felt all opposition melting within her. She thought—"When he commands, I must obey, for I am his, and I love him." Then she wondered if she had spoken aloud, for he called her "darling" very lovingly, and took her hand openly, where it lay on the table-cloth. With the other hand she raised the brandy glass and drank. He was right—of course he was right. She felt wonderful again. Strange how everything about her was growing small and beautifully clear, as if seen through the wrong end of a pair of opera glasses. She looked at his brown fingers enclosing her own. How she loved him! She must tell him about her vision—the miracle—the sign from heaven that had altered the whole course of her life. He would understand. She *must* share it with him. . . .

"Geoff, did you see anything strange when you left me this morning?"

"Strange?"

"Yes. You know the maidan at the top of the street where the college is? Wasn't there anything strange there? A crowd?"

"O, I know where you mean. I didn't go there, though. Turned off before—what's the name of that street on the right—a short cut—"

"O!"

"What about it, darling?"

"Well—you see. . . ." How difficult it was to explain. She struggled for words, then drank the rest of the brandy, and waited. It was like fire in her veins. . . . He was examining her little finger. . . . Fire running down the length of her arm into the little finger. . . . She fixed her eyes on the table-cloth and collected her wits with a great effort.

"This morning I saw a man killed." (Was that her voice, so slow and thick and deliberate? . . .)

"What d'you mean, killed?"

"Killed. Jush 'at. A man—'nother man shtabbed—stabbed him with a knife." She stopped and took a deep breath and spoke with careful deliberation. "He fell against the steps of my arabeyah."

"Good God! You don't mean it!"

"I do." She looked up at him and smiled. His face was enormously magnified, like a close-up on a screen—almost frightening.

"Poor little girl," he said suddenly. "It's been a shock for you. Let's go, shall we?" and he began looking around for a waiter.

This was awful. This was terrible. He didn't believe, didn't understand her beautiful secret. She must make him understand.

"Listen, Geoff, please listen." It was her turn now to take his hand.

"I want you to understand. It was so beautiful, like a—like a vishun—a m—miracle. It was splendid."

"All right. Yes. Waiter."

"But you're not lishning. I wanyou to undershtand." Frowning, she concentrated still harder to find the words that were escaping her. How speak when this fire was consuming her? . . . and her head was bursting, bursting, and he was growing larger every minute. She made a last desperate effort.

"It washemosh beaufuling I ever shaw. I wanyou t'undershtand. . . ."

"Yes, yes I know. Waiter! Bring my bill at once!"

"Blue 'n crimson 'n 'n all. . . ." (O, God, O, God, how could she make him understand, when there weren't any words to explain what . . . what . . . what was it she was trying to explain . . . and why was the table-cloth coming up to hit her in the face . . . and this terrible burning everywhere, and her head going to burst without a doubt. . . .)

He was helping her along the corridor . . . what for . . . she was icy now . . . why, O, why . . . there's the cloak room attendant. . . . "Prenez garde de Mademoiselle." . . . why? and what a funny thing to say . . . was that her face in the glass . . . that ghastly face . . . and then, quite suddenly, she knew that she was going to be desperately sick. . . .

Her one prayer, as she slowly returned to normal, was that Paula Cleveland should not be allowed to appear on the scene. Her prayer was answered.

Now she was powdering her face in the big mirror, and colouring her lifeless lips.

"Monsieur ask me to say that he wait for Madame in the automobile. Madame va mieux, non?" It was the charming cloak-room attendant. Miss Bartlett emptied all the money from her handbag into her hands. The attendant was grateful. "Without doubt an English milady," she murmured after the retreating form, and fell to counting the coins.

The moon had set; great Egyptian stars hung overhead; in the distance the band was playing its favourite tune—*Sweeee . . . Child*. There was no one about as she made her way unsteadily down the steps and along the drive to the waiting car, in which Captain Cunningham had been sitting, smoking and cursing, for nearly half an hour.

"Christ Almighty!" he kept repeating. "If there's one thing I do bar, it's a drunk woman. . . . That was a near thing, too, a narrow escape, another two minutes—wonder if I ought to go in and see how she is—she may have passed right out. . . . Don't want to run into any of the crowd though. . . . Whew! But that was a near thing—poor kid. And I was beginning to think her damned attractive . . . but this has torn it, good and proper. . . . Christ! How I hate a female drunk. . . ."

But after a while, being an upright English gentleman, he began to blame himself as partly responsible for the disaster. "Of course, I did make her drink that—brandy, but how was I to know she was so—tight? Poor little kid . . . talking murder like a blue streak. . . . I bet she's feeling like hell. Damn it all! I did make her drink. And she'll probably cut up rough over this. Best thing I can do is to sort of pretend it didn't

happen. I'll ask her out somewhere to tea (that ought to be safe enough). Seems a bit thick . . . still, I'll do it. I'll take her out once again—just to show there's no ill feeling. . . .”

And then, at last, he saw her coming, and went to meet her.

“Hullo! my dear. Feeling better. Isn't it a gorgeous night, what? Here, I've got a rug for you. That all right, eh? You get in, and I'll wrap it round you. How's that? Feeling like an Egyptian mummy, what, all swathed up! There, now we're off. . . .”

Weak and weary, she lay back in her seat. There were tears of gratitude in her eyes. She was glad of the dark. Once, she tried to make an apology, but he cut in hastily: “Are you going to the Air Force Sports on Saturday? Can I take you? I'll come along and pick you up about three, shall I?”

(“This,” she decided, “is the nicest man I've ever met.”)

Arrived at her flat, he helped her out and up the stairs, and kissed her hand at parting.

“Three on Saturday, then? Splendid. Good-bye, Marjorie—dear.”

Crying a little, she undressed and got into bed. What a day it had been—terrible and lovely, and shameful and glorious—like no other day in her life. How could she hope to sleep after these happenings. . . . She would write a letter to her brother in England, her favourite brother.

“Dearest Jack” (she began),

“I hope you are enjoying your leave. Do you remember Captain Cunningham at the Stuart's party? I think he is the nicest man I ever met. This morning I saw a man killed. On Saturday Captain C. is taking me to the Air Force Sports. . . .”

At this point she remembered that she had no dress suitable for the occasion. She wondered what colour to get—and a new hat . . . and shoes to go with it. . . .

Mohammed, entering with a cup of tea at a quarter to seven, was surprised to see the light left on in the room. He stood a moment squinting through the mosquito curtain at the tousled head: then coughed gently as was his habit.

“It is 6.30, honoured lady,” he said.

# THE SURVIVAL OF SCOTT

By AGNES MURE MACKENZIE

THE trouble with Scott, like the similar trouble with Shakespeare, and with many other men—witness Stevenson, whom nobody dare praise now, and by 1950, probably, witness Hardy—has been the indiscriminate adoration that insisted on setting all they wrote on a level. Now the natural result of putting *Cymbeline* and *Peveril* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* on a level with *Hamlet*, *The Antiquary*, and *Far from the Madding Crowd* is that the next generation are quite certain to put *Hamlet* on a level with *Cymbeline*. We are tolerant of Scott, liking the man—one has to be pretty well sodden with gin-and-jazz standards before it is possible not to do that: but we relegate his work to the Lower Fourth, which finds him inferior to Edgar Wallace.

As a matter of simple fact, some of him is. I cannot read Mr. Wallace myself, though I wish I could, for I wof his kind of fiction: but I had rather read any three of his than plough through *Peveril* or *The Monastery*. But, as it happens, Scott did write other books. His fiction indeed, falls into two great classes, the two fundamental categories of literature—those that he wrote because something in himself demanded he should write that particular book, and those that he wrote because, for extraneous reasons, he wanted to write a book, and that one would do. Sometimes he wanted, for reasons not ungenerous at worst, at best for the noble reason of honour itself, to make money. Sometimes he wanted to play a new game. Sometimes—a very dangerous reason for writing—he wanted to use up stuff he had observed: *The Pirate* is an obvious case in point. And the issue was, of course, that these books are dead. But the others, those that were born of the man's full life, have the stuff in them that answers mortality.

When we come to look over the list from *Waverley* onwards, we find an uncommon amount of variety. The scenes range from Shetland to India, the times through nearly a millenium. He soon grew afraid, or was made to grow afraid, in spite of his boast of being "one of the Black Hussars of literature, who neither give nor receive criticism," that he would repeat himself, and sought to change from the manner of his beginnings. The more's the pity. He had the excellence of a giant's strength, but a giant, none the less, of the race of Antaeus. When he could not touch his own soil, then the strength abandoned him—soil of time as well as of place, for to be himself he must write of an age that he could touch and inhabit as it was, no dislimning wrack of a half-invented dreamland. There, though, he was fortunate in his own time, for the Scotland of the late 18th century—he was a man of thirty in 1801—had a fullness and richness of inheritance for him that can seldom be matched for strength and variety. His Edinburgh was more intellectually alive, just then, than London or Paris, and

had the compactness, the unity in variety, that is possible only in a country so fiercely aristocratic as to be, in social practice, democratic. Those towering *lands*, where a duchess, an epochal philosopher, and a tailor's apprentice might jostle on the stairs, were completely typical. And that brilliant and scholarly society was not in the least what we mean by "academic." Its personages were personalities, not by any journalistic label or advertised pose, but because they had in them that quick heat of the blood that comes from the survival of the strongest in a small poor country, perpetually with her back to the wall through half a millenium of constant invasion by a richer enemy of eight times her man-power. It is normally difficult to convince an Englishman that Queen Elizabeth, say, was a real person : one can only do it by describing her love-affairs. But the Scot has a long, if not always an accurate, memory, and the past is always a vital part of his present. In Scott's own generation the change from the one to the other had a violence and thoroughness to which there are few historical parallels. He lived himself at the height of the real Scots Renaissance, put off in time for a couple of centuries by the evil forces that shaped the Scots Reformation, and all its ghastly after-consequences in the terrible seventeenth century and the agonies of the earlier part of his own. He himself was a man of the age that built Charlotte Square, of houses as strong, to be sure, as fortresses, but graceful, urbane, and elegant as good manners, the perfect habitation for "men of the world." But he knew men who knew, had been bred by, the old Highlands, who had seen the clans charge on the stricken field of Drum Mossie, lived the fantastic escapes of the wilder ballads, known exile as Dante knew it, and for the same reason, and would have signed that letter of his from Ravenna—and felt the heart-break under the gallant boast, "Can I not see everywhere the sun and stars?" He was a man of the Border, two centuries and no more—what are six generations to a Scotsman?—between him and the great Riding Ballads, and there was the blood, in this pleasant man-of-the-worldly well-read lawyer, of men who had led the like of Kinmont Willie. Look from the train as you sway over the Eden. It does not even seem very long ago, now, since keen Lord Scroop shook his fist across the wan water at Scott's own forebears grinning over their cruppers, and swore as "the Kinmont's airns played clang" into the mist on "the Scottish side." That was, as a matter of fact, 1596. Scott was born 175 years later, and his first book was a gathering of ballads. He had Scots history in the blood and the bone : and Scots history may have been very unpleasant to live in, for at any rate the greater part of it, but as fine arrogant stuff for the bone of a story, it has undoubtedly points, if one does not bother too much about what is going to look probable in Bloomsbury. English readers of Scott, in spite of his scrupulously careful fairness, his genuine affection for their country, are always at a little disadvantage. If the language were foreign they would have easier going : not being so, it is inclined to mask the fact that after three centuries of a common crown, the two cultures even yet are very distinct, and a Scot in many ways more at home in France than as

however friendly an invader of the country that gives so many of him a living. Scott, in spite of his notes, is as much a strain on an Englishman's credulity, as, shall I say, an American newspaper. It was not a fool, but it was an Englishman, who remarked once to me that what made him find Scott unreadable was the impossibility of his stories. "Such as—?" said I, in the mood of Rosa Dartle. "Oh well—*The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Heart of Midlothian*." And I had—I fear it was the satisfaction—of informing him that both plots were "straight" history. He was a young Cambridge man, and his tolerant smile is one of my beloved recollections. He knew that people didn't behave like that: it was too unlike the beautiful home life of "dear" Bedford Square. Nobody did these things in D. H. Lawrence. But these inter-probabilities of fiction, though a subject sufficiently joyous in themselves, are merely a by-issue. The point is simply that Scott was quintessentially an Edinburgh lawyer of the late 18th century, who happened, like so many of his class, to come of a poor cadet branch of a good family. He was a Scott of Harden, a Borderer like the Haig he would have loved.

Now Scott's early, great work grew out of this life in him. The first nine novels are all Scots in setting. And the setting is more than a matter of decoration. Scott cared about place, and he could render it, by a method old-fashioned, indeed, but adequate, of set description. He has not the art that Stevenson was to bring to perfection, of giving the landscape setting "in solution," by accumulated touches in the narrative. I once had to look for an example of Stevenson's landscape, chose the intensely vivid one of Gullane Sands in Alan's escape, and found that in fact there wasn't any description. There are simply a few phrases that seem at random. Scott's age had more leisure, and used a broader brush. His set-pieces, to our hurry, hold up the action. None the less, they enrich it, when they are of places seen and experienced. The rivulet "soaking its way obscurely through wreaths of snow" is not a stage property: one hears that water. But the true setting is not the landscape, not even Wolf's Crag, Tullyveolan, or Baliol's Lodging, but a given *society* at a given time. The time in three is his father's generation or thereby; three more come earlier in the century, though one is of a time whose men he knew; and the others in the 17th century—the two that really count, late in it. Only with two most significant exceptions did he ever again do work one can place on a level with that of these five *anni mirabiles*—with *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, and *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Their pendicles, *The Black Dwarf* and *A Legend of Montrose*, are below them, but touched at times with their quality, especially in Hob Elliot of *The Dwarf*; and *Montrose*, the weakest, for my co-alumnus Dugald Dalgetty, as lively as he is, is of the Jonsonian-Shavian type of character, in two dimensions against the Shakespearian four and the three at least of most of Scott's great characters—*Montrose*, I say, the weakest and also the last, is precisely the only one set before the great landmark of the generation of Dryden. Scott had begun to leave his own territory. In another year

he had left it with a vengeance, for England and the Middle Ages. *Ivanhoe* is a lively yarn. It was much in the fashion, the fashion *The Ingoldsby Legends* parodied, of the generation before the pre-Raphaelites, and *Patience* : and by the time one does know something about the Middle Ages it inclines to be less readable than Barham, who meant spoof. The substantial streak of the Border rider in Scott belonged to the days of Wat of Harden, not at all to those of Good Lord James, much less to those of David Earl of Huntingdon, Prince of Scotland and comrade-in-arms of Coeur-de-Lion. The ethic of all good men, their values of conduct, has a good deal in common in its fundamentals : but their philosophy, which means their intellectual understanding of each other's reactions and of their determinants, differs considerably. Scott was an 18th-century Protestant ; in assumptions—though the name would have made him swear—a good deal of a Whig, though a Whig of the finest type. He would have understood, though soundly disliked, John Knox. He would have liked St. Louis, but without more than half understanding or even quite trusting him. (As generous as he was, he misses the starry quality in Montrose.) Like another Scot who worshipped the Middle Ages more fervently, “ he loved all the cathedral but the altar.” He had indeed a sort of intuitive natural sense of that fundamental metaphysic which is the basis of the Catholic, and consequently mediaeval, *weltanschauung*—the sense of matter as the vehicle of spirit, of spirit normally mediated by matter : so that he instinctively fell into the gestures that had been created on these assumptions, and *felt* them. But his intellect of an Edinburgh lawyer, of an 18th-century Protestant man of the world (for his Episcopacy was rather a matter of sociological preference than from any attachment to the theology of the non-juring Church) was ill at home with his metaphysic : it had lost the sacraments that gave that its clue. So he could never let be his intuitions without a certain shame for their lack of fashion, nor render a reason that could flout the fashion. Thus his mediaevalism always remains in the key of the Eglinton Tournament : it is fancy-dress. When it does come to life, it is because he has touched the common nerve of humanity, and writes of those qualities he understood, valour and loyalty, courtesy and kindness.

It was very much this lack of his that wrecked him when he went back to Scotland in the deplorable *Monastery* and *Abbot*. On the face of it, Scotland in the century of the great Riding Ballads should have given him the happiest of settings. In fact, *The Abbot* has a lively picture of Edinburgh under Moray : but oh the Wardour Street of the Catholic refugees, of the monks, the abbot, and the White Lady ! The White Lady is a very revealing symptom. *Kenilworth* keeps the period, but goes to England, and in spite of what should have been a better subject, is heavy and flat in the main. *The Pirate* tries for novelty again by emptying his notebook on the Shetlands, even now less Scotland than Cornwall is England. It is good guidebook, but pure tushery as fiction. *The Fortunes of Nigel* improves : it is shallow enough, but lively. Scott is using the London of the Elizabethan dramatists, whom he had really absorbed into himself. The

main plot might be Heywood, the Whitefriars is pure Dekker, and he happily used an inversion of his earlier trick of giving perspective to his pictures of Scotland by making his "eyepiece" character an Englishman. Nigel is not very interesting, but he gets Scott's feet on the ground, and King James and Richie have almost the old vigour. It lapsed, and terribly, in *Peperil*, but *Quentin Durward*, using again the *Nigel* device of a young Scot abroad, is much the best of this second group, and far above the other mediaeval ones, perhaps because by the later fifteenth century the Middle Ages had ceased to be mediaeval; except for a few gay-coloured accessories. It is thin enough, but a good story. Louis ranks with James, and Quentin is one of Scott's liveliest heroes—a lad of mettle and sense, with an agreeable young solemnity, like a more graceful version of his descendant, the young D'Artagnan. And old Lord Crawford of the Garde Écossaise may be the ancestor of the mellowed and mature D'Artagnan who was kindly to poor little La Vallière and gave the immortal directions to his landlady about that garret.

Then—perhaps it was the feel of Crawford and Lesley—Scott went back to his own country, and to greatness. He dared not return completely to the old key: *St. Ronan's Well* tried an experiment that one could wish he had repeated oftener, of taking his own generation, setting a story in the key of the Glenallan strand of *The Antiquary* to unfold itself from a foreground à la Jane Austen. *Redgauntlet* goes frankly back to the 18th century, but tries for novelty by adopting the letter-form. One might wish it had not, though since Alan and Darsie are the ghosts of Scott's youth, one loses less than might have been expected. Both books rank among the very best of his work. He never came to the height of them again, not even when he touched Scotland, save once for a flash in the enchantment of that exquisite miniature, the portrait of Mrs. Bethune Baliol in the introduction to *The Chronicles of the Canongate*—a Raeburn in prose, and one of the great Raeburns. It is the quintessence of old Scots gentlewomanhood, witty, warm-hearted, cool-headed, unbreakably gallant. Even so might Beatrice herself grow old. Scott pays tribute—for the thing is a portrait—to adorable old ladies of his youth. Mrs. Bethune Baliol explains a good deal of him.

What she explains is what made Scott's great work. And that is not an easy thing to describe. Perhaps the key of it is a rich fullness and range of human liking, that is none the less not a vane blown by all winds, but has a perpetual and clear reference to a very definite standard of personal values. Critics, and naturally, the young, grumble because Scott has little to say about sex. Now, sex is certainly one of the most interesting factors in life, but it is only one of them, after all. Scott, who commenced novelist at forty-three, was more interested in the general gamut of human relations, of which he shows an uncommon variety, aided by an enormous social range. His kings are famous, but his peasants are equally rich and various. He draws a fisherman's tragedy without patronage, and what was more surprising in his period, without any Rousseau-cum-Wordsworth senti-

mentality about the necessary moral superiority of the peasant. Mucklebackit's loss of his son is like a story out of the Old Testament. A king and a beggar who face with manliness the basic mortalities of human life are level to him as men, and without confusion of the other points, not essence but inseparable, in which they are not level. He knows that, stripped, the beggar may be a better man than the king, that the king may be a better man than the beggar. It is not so often one finds a grasp of both points. Also, he passes one of the most subtle tests of a competent author's manhood. He could draw a man of his own type and class, and make him admirable, yet human, without having to guy him in any way. Try the test on Thackeray. You would not find the equivalent of Colonel Mannering or Counsellor Pleydell. He never drew a gentleman in his life but he gave him some reason why his creator could look down on him. Colonel Newcome had to be a simpleton, Dobbin grotesque in manner and appearance: even Esmond has more or less to marry his mother-in-law. Thackeray never dared not to condescend. Scott, though he has a noble power of scorn for such types as Glossin or the Argyll of *Montrose*, has not a touch of that meanness. So he moves among his people, on a level with them, experiencing them in their own terms. They are never there to show how much he is their superior, nor even as masks or *personae* for himself. He grows a little self-conscious at times, at first, but after all, for a successful poet to write novels, was, before Scott, a sizeable derogation: it needed his work, in M. Chevalley's shrewd phrase, "pour anoblir le roman en y portant l'éclat des genres jusqu'alors dits nobles." The elaborate anonymity, so far as it was not merely a piece of High Jinks and a self-defence against exposure to fools—not unneeded, as the *Letter-book* shows pretty plainly—reveals that the shyness lasted longer than it showed. But no novelist has ever majored less afore the muckle pier-glass.

Perhaps in some ways it is rather a pity. The old charge that Scott's heroes are colourless has some truth, and might have had less if he had put more of himself into them. But to begin with, he rarely means them to be heroic. They are decent lads of twenty, seen from the fatherly angle of forty-odd. Crèvecoeur's cold-watering of Quentin's young romantics, Waverley trying on his uniform, are significant. One reason why Scott is unpopular with the young is that he does not take them at their own estimation. Waverley, in fact, who is much the type of most of them, is by no means the "sneaking piece of imbecility" Scott called him once in a fit of exasperation. He is a decent honest lad, not without courage, and generous enough. And undoubtedly he is a real person—one, by the way, who would be much at home in a Galsworthy. But it is true that one would like him better if like Fergus and the Baron he had thrown his cap over the mill before it was blown from his head. And his funk of Flora, though good psychology and good dry comedy, is hardly a *beau rôle*. On the other hand, for Scott's type of fiction, his immense broad canvas that so often gives us both sides of a national conflict and always covers a great social range, a passive central figure is structurally an advantage. When he takes a type

like the Master of Ravenswood, one notices that the canvas is much smaller, there are fewer episodes, and the action moves in a narrower channel. There is another reason, too. So many of these *jeunes premiers* are English. The device was an excellent one for a man in Scott's position: besides giving that sharpness to one's own perceptions of the familiar that is gained by seeing them from alongside a stranger, it allowed him a chance for a natural explanation of points that would have puzzled the English readers whom the facts of the census made eight-ninths of his British public. And Scott never thought of his art as "self-expression." He wrote as Shakespeare did, to entertain his public and make a living in the most interesting and profitable way. But the useful device has an inherent defect. By making an Englishman the central figure in this kind of setting, he rather asked for this particular charge: the softer outlines of the national character, the national tendency to *viae mediae*, though very useful to the construction of *Waverley*, are apt to produce an effect as of lowered relief.

His heroines, perhaps, are more reasonably attacked. Like Raeburn, he was a little shy of young women of his own class, and Jeanie Deans apart—she has something of a Shakespearian quality—they do run to mere sketches of one of three types: the gentle retiring ones like Rose Bradwardine, the lively like Julia Mannering, and the tragic like Flora MacIvor. Once, most happily, he combined the last two, in the lovely, pitiful, and living person of Di Vernon, and again (alas that a publisher's prudery stepped in!) in Clara Mowbray, who is Di once more, but with Rashleigh triumphant to wreck her. It is seldom, however, that he does get past the type. But it is a good type—that, fundamentally, of Jane Austen's Anne and Elizabeth, upright and plucky and as a rule intelligent, *well-bred* in the fullest meaning of the word. From a eugenic point of view, in fact, they compare rather well with the more common types of the general fiction of the nineteen-twenties, now happily past.

But the heroes, still more the heroines, are seldom important. They are there simply to cause the rest to be. Since they do do that, one can only be grateful. The whole panorama of 18th-century Lowland Scotland is here, noble and beggar, shrewd lawyer and lunatic: Scott is nowhere more Shakespearian than in his mad-folk. I say Lowland, for his power cooled when he crossed the Highland Line. Fergus MacIvor, certainly, is a penetrating study of a real type, moved partly by an honest loyalty, partly by the lure of a reckless gamble for advancement—and as much for the sake of the gamble as for the advancement—a little patronisingly amused by his own chiefship, that yet is more part of him than he is aware, and when the game is lost going to torture and death with dignity. Flora is more exalted, more purely generous—a real type too, but a rarer one, and one with which Scott was not quite so much at home. Evan Dhubb is as real as Fergus, and quite unlike him: but he has his moment of greatness at the trial, and it rings truth. Scott never did Highlanders so well again. Even Rob Roy is a Borderer in tartans, and Helen, the Dougal creature,

and the Highland Widow, are pure Drury Lane. In *Waverley* he was looking at the Highlands for himself: later he had to see them through the craze he had created, that put Brummell's fat friend into a kilt, and sees false. It is not an uncommon phenomenon.

But the range of character is not all the riches, though there he had nearly always, even when the character itself is a simple outline, that sense of the shape and colour of human experience that is so often to seek in professed psychologists. There is the action. The method is something antique, though an age that was to venerate Miss Dorothy Richardson, and later Mr. Joyce, can hardly grumble if it lacks conciseness. There is action, and it moves. And it is never mere action: there is always in it that thrust of the human will that is the fundamental of drama. His plots—though less often in the books that matter—can be loose, and even there there is rather too much reliance for their prime mover on the missing heir motif: but the missing heir was as fashionable then as the amateur prostitute was in the nineteen-twenties, and one can get more variety out of him. The looseness helps the great range of episode, gives excuse for the splendid crowd-pieces like the Porteous Riot. The one really closely fashioned book is *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and there there is less of this rich general background. But it is one of his three greatest, though it is scarcely typical, and English readers have always been a little frightened by it. It paints a world that for one reason or another they do not like to admit to validity. It was written when physical agony had stripped off the 18th-century lawyer, and the stuff throughout is pure Renaissance drama, or like the old true song of *The Bonny Earl of Moray*, that crystallises that in a tune and a score of lines. It is the most unified and direct of all Scott's books, rising steadily with gathering force to the climax foreshadowed in its ironic omens. Even the comic relief is the ghastly farce of Caleb Balderstone, grotesque humiliations forced on a fierce pride by wrong-headed loyalty. Chapman and Webster and Middleton of *The Changeling* knew that world: the cailleachs at Lucy's wedding might have crooned outside the gates of the palace of Malfi.

Scott rarely touched that note, though. "The clouds of pride and madness and mysterious sorrow that hang more heavily on the noble houses of Scotland than on any other of the children of men" roll again in the Glenallan parts of *The Antiquary*. Here, however, they are only parts: but if their force is less reverberant than in *The Bride*, the book makes up by its enormous range and sweep, from Lady Glenallan to Madge Mucklebackit, Edie the beggar (a character who would be pure Shakespeare if he were not pure Scots) to the hot-headed young ensign. *St. Ronan's Well* has the tragedy again, but on a narrower, more domestic scale, rising surprisingly and effectively out of a foreground of lively social comedy. There are fewer of the great characters, though Meg is a joy and Lady Penelope not an ill comrade for Lady Catherine de Bourgh. May they meet in Purgatory, and when I am there! The peculiar quality of Clara's slowly revealed agony lacks part of its motive as the book stands. I wish the

Black Hussar had ridden down his well-meaning publisher. But after all, one knows what was omitted, and that flaw apart, the book comes with the best. I put these three together, for myself, in their three different types of excellence. *The Heart of Midlothian* would stand level for a fourth, if it were not for its long-drawn and watered-down conclusion. But up to Jeanie's interview with the Queen, some of his very greatest work is in it. It does what Wordsworth attempts in his peasant poems, gives *la grandeur des humbles*. Jeanie is the type of peasant that helps one to understand St. Joan. The social status of the main characters means much of the superb Scots dialogue. His English speech, in the middle key, is good : in intenser moments, as in the parting of Waverley and Fergus, sometimes finely dramatic, though the social convention of more formal speech and the literary one—a convention like that of blank verse, and no more difficult to become accustomed to—for a more elaborate rounding of the sentence, make it sometimes, to us, feel written rather than spoken. The Scots had no such convention to shape it, however. And as most Scots gentlefolk, even now, are bilingual, he wrote the vernacular as native to him, and always as spoken speech. Meg Merrilies, Mucklebackit's elegy, the shrewd simplicity of Dinmont, Meg Dods, or Bailie Jarvie, the Biblical dignity of David Deans, the dry jests or the gorgeous vituperation of Edie Ochiltree—how flat is “ Devil take him ! ” to “ Deil scowp wi'm ! ”—the tenderness, humour, or magnificent scorn of a hundred passages reveal his command of the medium, while he shows, or rather hides, a remarkable skill in making it read easily to those to whom, like myself, a Highlander, it is not native. *Redgauntlet* may come a little below *Midlothian*, but I am not sure : there are the portraits of the young Scott and his friend, episodes like the escape of Summertrees, and the climax in that most moving moment when Redgauntlet realises the cause is lost. It is one man's tragedy, and a broken prince's : but it has in it one of the deep notes of all history. And no book that contains that masterpiece of the grotesque-uncanny, *Wandering Willie's Tale*, could perish easily. *Tam o' Shanter* and *Thrawn Janet* are superb, but neither of them lifts to the heroic as this when we come on *Clavers* sitting a little apart, and

About the deid hour o' the night  
We hear the bridles ring.

The man was great : he wrote at least six great novels, and another half-dozen unusually good ones, besides things as excellent in other kinds as *Proud Maisie* and *The Lives of the Novelists*. It is unfortunate that the standard of fitness for youth of classical fiction should be so entirely measured by the absence of dealings with sex, as witness the affliction of twelve-year-olds by Shakespeare's dramas of high politics. Scott, like Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Fielding, should be forbidden till one has turned twenty-five. The schoolmasters have been the ruin of him.



THE STAIRCASE LIGHT  
*Woodcut by* HILDA M. QUICK

## A HERO TO HIS VALET

By ANNE FREMANTLE

“ Our estimates of persons, unless they are frequently revived by personal intercourse, are apt to alter insensibly, and to become untrue. They acquire increased definiteness, but they lose in comprehensiveness. Especially is this true of those who are dead.”

**J**UST a century ago the perpetrator of this remark was born, and his centenary justifies some enquiry into his life, his character, and his writings. Like photographs, centenaries are of two kinds ; those that flatter, and those that “ don’t do justice,” whilst, like birthdays, they are sometimes welcome, and sometimes not. It is strange how various an organ is human memory, for whilst to contemporaries and to the writers of obituary notices, it is the men of action who loom huge, who fill the sails of the “ ship of state ” and puff and puff until they blow her safe home or founder her upon some rock, posterity remembers, almost inevitably, men who were guilty neither of their country’s peril nor of her safety, but who, unobtrusively hidden in the quieter corners of the earth, “ pursued the even tenour of their way.” Of such was W. Hale White, who was born on December 22nd, 1831, at Bedford, of well-to-do lower middle class parents. His father was a printer, who afterwards became for many years doorkeeper at the House of Commons, his mother came from Colchester, where Hale White and his mother and sisters were taken every summer for their holiday. “ Our maternal grandmother,” he writes, “ lived in a house dated 1619 over the doorway. There was a pleasant garden at the back, and the scent of a privet hedge in it has never to this day left me.” He had a very happy childhood, with whole afternoons passed “ half naked or altogether naked in the solitary meadows by the river, and in the water ” ; in the winter there was skating over the long reaches, and football, and steeple-chases over hedge and ditch, and in the spring, fishing. But all these joys endured only on weekdays : Sunday was “ a season of unmixed gloom.” No cooking was done, no hot food permitted, however cold the weather, no letters were opened : after family prayers and breakfast there was Sunday School at nine o’clock, and three more services followed. White’s parents were devout Calvinists, and Hale was educated “ for the ministry ” no less carefully than was young Edmund Gosse. Indeed many passages of *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* recall *Father and Son*, especially the description of evening chapel, at which the drowsy Hale could never keep awake, although he knew that “ to sleep under the Gospel was sin.” His reason for objecting so strongly to this endless churchgoing is a very curious one, he declares that :

to come maundering into God’s presence when we have nothing particular to say is an insult. We should not venture to take up His time with commonplaces or platitudes ; but our minister seemed to consider that the Almighty who had the Universe to govern, had more leisure at his disposal than the idlest loungee at a club.

But from his sabbatarian upbringing he claims to have derived two great virtues : truthfulness and chastity. " My parents would never endure a lie or the least equivocation " and " purity of life " he looked upon as " a simply incalculable gain." When he was fourteen, and it became necessary that an occupation be found for him, he was taken to the Countess of Huntingdon's College, where " systematic theology was the great business of our academic life. Step by step, like a house of cards, the President built up for us the Calvinistic creed," and " no shadow of a suspicion of its truth ever crossed my mind." He does not seem to have profited greatly by his time at Cheshunt : the other students were " young men of no education, taken from behind the counter, whose whole attention was absorbed by their chances of getting wealthy congregations and of making desirable matches," and with these young Hale had nothing in common. One, whom White describes at some length, and afterwards introduces into *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, was a young Babbitt after Sinclair Lewis' own heart : " he was always dawdling after ' the sex ' which was one of his sweet phrases, and yet he was not passionate " (with passion White had every sympathy ; he goes on to say " Passion does not dawdle and compliment, nor is it nasty, as this fellow was. Passion may burn like a devouring flame ; and, in a few moments, like flame, may bring down a temple to dust and ashes, but it is earnest as flame, and essentially pure ").

Already, whilst he was at Cheshunt, the " continual conflict between Hebraism and Hellenism " which was to be fought within him his life long, was begun, and " a little Greek mythological story was of more importance to me, than a war which filled the newspapers. What then, could I do with my theological treatises ? " Like Augustine, who cursed himself because he was " Ciceronian rather than Christian," like Bernard, who fixed his eyes upon earth lest they be ensnared by the loveliness of the Alps, Hale White strove manfully with his affliction, with this craving for beauty which no creed could satisfy. But in vain. For, in a sense, even his education was against him, for his family was by no means unintellectual : his father would declaim Byron from the composing desk in his printing office, and this Puritan who wrote for the newspapers to pay his debts, was a friend of the Russells, and obtained for his son an introduction to Carlyle, he had too, a nephew who read Goethe. But for the Test Acts, Hale would have gone from Cheshunt to Oxford ; as it was, he, with two fellow students, was sent to New College, St. John's Wood, in 1852. He was expelled from thence, together with his companions, on account of his views with regard to Biblical Inspiration. His father wrote a defence of his conduct, entitled " To think or not to think " which gained for Hale the approbation, and indeed the friendship, of F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley. Hale now attempted to find a job : he first became assistant master at a school in Stoke Newington, but he was driven by an attack of the hysteria which was to trouble him throughout life, to leave the morning after his arrival. His next employment was under John Chapman on the *Westminster*

*Review*, where he met George Eliot, and, later, Caleb Morris. The former interested him little, the latter influenced him profoundly, for it was through Morris that "the Bible became what it always has been to me," as he relates in his *Autobiography*. He did not remain long with Chapman, leaving after an offer of partnership, which he refused. Through Mr. Whitbread he obtained a clerkship at Somerset House; after two or three years there, during which he married and had twins, a son, Ernest, and a daughter, Molly, he was transferred to the Admiralty, in 1868. He remained there until 1902, retiring after 38 years of service, when he was 71. His first wife "did not care for poetry," but in 1908 he made friends with a girl of 31, Dorothy Horace Smith, whom he married in 1911. This was an ideally happy experiment, and however drab, unhappy and emotionally inadequate his life had been, from the moment he met "Dorothy" all was serene. His last years were his happiest—of him are true Clough's lines:

In front the sun climbs slow—how slowly,  
But westward, look, the land is bright.

He never wrote anything until he was nearly fifty: his first book, published in 1880, under his own name, was a translation of Spinoza's *Ethics*. In 1881 he published *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* which is largely an account of his own life, "thinly disguised," in 1885 appeared *Mark Rutherford's Deliverance* and in 1887 *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*. These three novels attracted no little attention: for the first time Dissent, at whose expense Dickens was pleased to make so merry, found a champion: a writer who treated of it sympathetically, and who took it seriously. Hale White owes, it has been said, "his literary eminence to the powerful studies of domestic, social, moral and theological problems contained in this remarkable trilogy of novels."

The *Autobiography* is indeed a strange book. Published ten years later than Hardy's *Desperate Remedies*, six years after *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and later than Pater's *Renaissance*, the style, technique and content are as unaffected by any of these as is the subject matter, or the general handling of the theme. White was only three years junior to Meredith, Ibsen and Tolstoi, yet from his writings it is possible to conclude that he never "heard on any o' them." He is, as far as he goes, unique, and his isolation, if not splendid, is at least interesting. The chief, indeed the only, problem in the *Autobiography* or the *Deliverance* is the relation of the individual soul to a personal God: both these novels show how all struggles to do without God lead to moral instability, yet do not make the idea of surrender to the, nor indeed to any, Divinity, very attractive. "With no Church, no philosophy, no religion" Mark Rutherford complains "the wonder is that anybody on whom use and wont relax their hold should ever do anything more than blindly rove hither and thither, arriving at nothing." But Mark, although he loves his childhood's faith, is led back to God through Nature, the Bible, and his own loneliness.

His poverty and depression lead him to a "sorrowing Saviour." "The healthy, active and well-to-do need Him not," he explains, "they require nothing more than their own health and prosperity. But everyone who has walked in sadness because his destiny has not fitted his aspirations, turns to Jesus, and finds himself in Him." This curious vision of Christ as the Prince of Failures, in many ways agrees with Huysman's dictum *Dieu n'habite pas les corps sains*. White has, indeed, many points of resemblance with the author of *Sainte Lydwine*. The one crawled to God from the depths of mental despair and hypochondriacal despondency, the other from the sloughs and quagmires of sin: neither are normal, nor ever happy: neither, in these first stages of their recovery, can join the sons of God in their "shouting for joy." But Rutherford had already realised, through Wordsworth, the affinity between Nature and her God: "Christianity," he affirms, "in strange historical fashion is an expression of nature, a projection of her into a biography and a creed," and the *Autobiography* abounds in lovely descriptions of the countryside. The following accounts of midday in September and of noon by the sea, are good examples:

At midday the stillness was profound. We sat down on a floor made of the leaves of last year. The silence was broken only by the softest of whispers descending from the great trees which spread over us their protecting arms. Every now and then it died down almost to nothing, and then slowly swelled and died again, as if the gods of the place were engaged in divine and harmonious talk.

This breathes the calm of autumn; the second extract suggests a more complete repose:

so still was the great ocean, so quietly did everything lie in it, that the wavelets which licked the shore were as pure and bright as if they were a part of the mid-ocean depths. Some fishing boats were becalmed just in front of us. Their shadows slept, or almost slept, upon the water, a gentle quivering alone showing that it was not complete sleep, or if sleep, that it was sleep with dreams.

*The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* opens with an admirable description of the 20th April, 1814, the day Louis XVIII was welcomed in London by the Prince Regent. It is a very lively and absorbing novel, and Pauline, the heroine, is an excellently well drawn character. She is the daughter of a Frenchman, named Dupin, and of Victorine, his mistress, a brave and gallant woman, who saved her unworthy lover from the guillotine. She and her adopted father, Caillaud, enter into the lives of Zachariah Coleman, a Calvinist printer, and of his wife. They all become friends of a certain Major Maitland, and through him become involved with the "Friends of the Poor." The story ends sadly with the hanging of Caillaud, who shot the Major's murderer during the march of the Blanketeers. Zachariah suffers two years' imprisonment for being involved in the fray. On his release, as his wife is now dead, he marries Pauline, but she dies in childbirth. The characterisation is very well done: the frigid, pious Mrs. Coleman, flattered by the Major's attentions yet miserably jealous of her husband and Pauline, is a very alive person, whilst the impetuous Pauline,

the meetings of the "Friends of the People," and the condition of Manchester in the early nineteenth century, are all made very alive. But perhaps the most striking thing about the book is its rage against the uselessness of all "the undisciplined wildness and the feebleness of the attempts made by the people to better themselves." The latter part of this novel, from Pauline's death onwards, forms a kind of epilogue: but like Christiana's progress, or *Paradise Regained*, it does not compare with the first part. Of White's later novels, *Miriam's Schooling* may be dismissed as a poor attempt to prove that although women should be educated above their class, they should be content to remain in it, nor seek to "better themselves." It was published in 1890 and was followed in 1893 by *Catherine Furze*. This opens with a very powerful picture of a country town, which is anticipatory of the early chapters of Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale*. Here is the Bell inn:

in the centre was the Moot Hall, a quaint little building, supported on oak pillars, and in the shelter beneath, the farmers assembled on Market Day. All around the Moot Hall, and extending far up and down the street, were cattle pens and sheep pens which were never removed. Most of the shops were still bow-windowed, with small panes of glass, but the first innovation, indicative of a new era at hand, had just been made. The druggist, a man of science and advanced ideas, had replaced his bow windows with plate glass, and had erected a kind of balustrade of stucco, so as to hide as much as possible of the attic windows, which looked over, meekly protesting. Nearly opposite the Moot Hall was the Bell Inn, the principal inn in the town. There were other inns, respectable enough, such as the Bull, a little higher up, patronised by the small commercial travellers and farmers, but the entrance hall to the Bell had sand on the floor and carriers made it a house of call. Both the Bull and the Bell had market dinners, but at the Bell the charge was three and sixpence, and sherry was often drunk. There the steward to the Honourable Mr. Eaton, the principal land owner, always met the tenants. The Bell was Tory and the Bull was Whig.

Catherine herself is a delightful child, and Eastthorpe an amusing, scandal-mongering little town. Catherine's love affair with a married clergyman is most discreet: she dies, and the clergyman as a result is more than usually amiable to his own very charming wife. *Clara Hopgood* is a less attractive girl: Mr. White, it would seem, is trying to give the story more "pep" when he introduces a clandestine love affair and its inevitable result. This novel, published in 1896, is a not very successful study of two "intellectual" women. White delighted in "brainy" girls: in *Mrs. Fairfax* he describes his ideal type; in Priscilla Broad he decries his pet aversion, the pretty, feckless creature who becomes merely "pretty little Mrs. Allen." Yet he could ridicule the blue stocking very effectively, and does so in *George Lucy's Grandchild*. He believed women should develop their intellects, but not, however, at the expense of their womanliness: rather at that of their femininity, if such a distinction may be made. He wanted them not less wives and mothers, because companions, but less bird-like, less silly and frivolous. Quiet girls with thoughtful

foreheads, who were good sick nurses, yet read *Epictetus*: such were the types he admired. But *Clara Hopgood* does not quite justify nor explain itself: the Dido and Aeneas scene between Miriam and her admirer is weak: Miriam's reasons for refusing to marry the father of her illegitimate child are even weaker, and it is unfortunate that she should get the plum she does not deserve and her sister covets, in the shape of an elderly Jew named Baruch. Clara goes off broken hearted to Italy with Mazzini, and dies there. In 1898 White published an essay entitled *An Examination of the Charges of Apostasy Against Wordsworth* in which, after affirming "I think we must admit that, so far as the French revolution was concerned, Wordsworth did not turn traitor"—he goes on to say "solemn institutions are at the present time more than ever necessary; we suppose that literature can take their place, that they were the device of an age which had no books, but it is possible that it may be wise to preserve them, just because we have so many books and because there is so much to be learnt. We are beginning to see that the merest fragment added to the stock of beliefs which enable us to live in peace and hope is of more value than profitless rebellion." The author of *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane* had travelled far, farther even than his admired Wordsworth, and in how few years, along the road of conservatism. The *Pages from a Journal* contain many good things, amongst them this lovely recollecting of an early morning in January:

A warm, still morning, with a clear sky and stars. At first the hills were almost black, but as the dawn ascended, they became dark green, of a peculiarly delicate tint which is never seen in the day time. The quietude is profound, although a voice from an unseen fishing-boat can now and then be heard. How strange the landscape seems! It is not a variation of the old landscape; it is a new world. The half moon rides high in the sky, and near to her is Jupiter. A little further to the left is Venus, and still further down is Mercury, rare apparition, just perceptible where the deep blue of the night is yielding to the green which foretells the sun. The east grows lighter, the birds begin to stir in the bushes, and the cry of a gull rises from the base of the cliff. The sea becomes responsive, and in a moment is overspread with continually changing colour, partly that of the heavens above and partly self contributed. With what slow, majestic pomp is the day preceded, as though there had been no day before it and no other would follow it.

In 1905 he wrote his *John Bunyan*, a very sympathetic study of the Bedford Dissenter, to whom he, spiritually, had some resemblances, although he was entirely without the divine gift of imagination which lifted Bunyan from his prison cell to the Delectable Mountains from whence the celestial City might be seen. White was a good critic: his essay on Byron, Goethe and Matthew Arnold, is a masterly piece of work, and all he says about Milton is worth reading.

He was a regular correspondent to two or three provincial papers, and contributed to and reviewed for several literary journals, amongst them *The Nation*. Robertson Nicholl and H. W. Massingham were friends and admirers of his, though Nicholl complained that *Catherine Furze* was marked by "great ethical confusion." In 1910 White published *More*

*Pages from a Journal* and in 1915 *Last Pages* appeared posthumously, edited by his second wife. In 1922 she published her *Groombridge Diary*, a detailed account of the last five years of his life.

His literary affinities were few, and his literary indebtednesses even fewer. Of his contemporaries, he is near only to George Gissing and George Macdonald, and he owes more to Macdonald than to Gissing, for the *Ryecroft Papers* are of a different mettle than the "moderate Calvinism" which suited White best. His theology is far, but his temper is near, that of the author of *David Elginbrod*; though he never came near *Phantastes*, *Lilith* or *The Golden Key* he had much of Macdonald's sweet earnestness. Dissent has produced little great talent: Bunyan and Cowper are perhaps its solitary laureates, but White was always faithful to his father's creed, and can be claimed as one of Calvinism's novelists, if not of her genii. Although in some ways broadminded, he remained always a stern Puritan. "We must face the fact that we cannot read the Elizabethan dramatists and Thomas à Kempis," he told Dorothy Smith, and in the *Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* he is categorical enough:

above all, there must be no toying with passion, no books permitted, which are not of a heroic turn. When the boy becomes a man he may read Byron without danger. To a youth he is fatal.

Yet himself he was a passionate devotee of Byron, as was his father before him! For over fifty years he spent the hours between 5.30 and 8.0 each morning reading the Bible, or Shakespeare, and no man was more convinced than he of the essential difference between good and evil: principles were to him "all in all" and he even went so far as to say "men who are totally at variance ought not to be friends." But there was another side to him, a very human side which sympathised with Saul's concubine, Rizpah the Horite, and loathed "that dancing David, who took Uriah's wife, and basely murdered Uriah, and was said to be a man after God's own heart." He tried always to attain to that way of life which Wordsworth recommended so wholeheartedly, whose object was

The virtue to exist by faith  
As soldiers live by courage.

But he did not always succeed, and was subject to the most terrible attacks of hysteria, and of a type of "persecution mania" which made him despair of himself and of the world. He could never call in his senses to cure his soul, nor did his soul ever cure his senses, as Wilde counselled, though in his latter days, chiefly through Miss Smith's excellent influence, he shook off a good deal of his seriousness and melancholy. Her *Groombridge Diary* gives a personal and very intimate picture of White as an old man; still unbending: "He told me of certain books which he leaves on his shelves unopened: they would do him harm," but yet very kindly, as when he condoles with a lady on the death of her pet dog: "O Miss —, I am so sorry for you." The lady, a more than middle aged lady, almost burst out crying. She said, "I knew you would be, Mr. White!

you sent me such a letter." In this *Groombridge Diary* the minutest details of his daily life are recorded; no word passes his lips but the precious crumb is reverently gathered up. Sometimes he is pleased to be playful: "What could be more disastrous than to weary of a good man? Worse than wearying of a bad one." At other times he is serious, and discourses upon Mrs. White's belief in a personal devil. This volume was surely borne upon the last wave of Victorianism and of all it stood for: "After supper," runs one entry, "we talked of the Royal Family." Another day "Hale spoke to me of Keble's *Christian Year*"; yet another, "he talked a great deal about Wordsworth and Coleridge, and about Scott." Even Mrs. White admits "We did an enormous amount of talking; we could talk for the best part of a morning, and then get up in horror at the hour." The leisure of these pre-war days seems to post-war generations almost unbelievable. It is delightful to find so conscientious a Boswell as the second Mrs. White: "When Hale has Bengel for supper and a plate of pudding," she records on Thursday, June 23rd, "he takes the Bengel and the pudding alternately—indiscriminately would be better—because they happen to be side by side on the tray."

It is a little difficult to find Hale White his niche, either among his contemporaries, or in relation to posterity: his great originality lay in his writing of the Dissenting lower middle classes, of the country-town tradespeople, at a time when *The Importance of Being Earnest* was drawing crowded houses, and the *beau monde* was reading the old Ibsen or the young Shaw. The second Mrs. Hale White, who understood him better than anyone, has perhaps said the last word about him: "here you have got the commonplace, real commonplace, which is nothing more than it proposes to be, and moves only in circumscribed spheres."

# CORRESPONDENCE

## THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK EXHIBITION

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY.)

SIR,—Should the International Book Exhibition be held in London in 1934, it would in my opinion, be of great benefit to the British printing and publishing industries. The two exhibitions which I have attended have brought together enthusiasts from every city in Europe, and have induced many Americans to make a special journey across the Atlantic for the rare pleasure of seeing the fine books of every country displayed in one place. This would be the first full opportunity for British publishers to show the world how, during the past ten years in this country alone, fine printing has been democratized and brought within the reach of every book-loving reader rather than remaining the toy of speculators and snobs.

But it is by no means to be taken for granted that London will have the honour of playing host to the third International Book Exhibition. Its rival is an Italian city which is only too eager to take full advantage of generous official support by housing the books attractively and undertaking all the expensive clerical work and preliminary propaganda which is necessary to the success of so considerable an undertaking. Those of us who visited the *Salon du Livre* in Paris this spring were far more impressed by the nationalistic enthusiasm of the Italian book-producers than by any new achievement—either economic or aesthetic—represented by the books themselves. From such conversations as I had with leading figures of Continental publishing, I am quite sure that only one thing is necessary to turn the scale in favour of London : namely, the assurance that a responsible committee has been formed here to undertake the arrangements.

The hall must be large enough to contain at least 15 separate sections, each containing at least 100 books of a particular country, with one large additional room for English books and preferably separate rooms for children's books and other special classifications. The proportionment of space, the provision of proper lighting, cases and frames ; the preparation of a good catalogue supplemented by a file containing detailed information about each volume, and perhaps, most important of all, the labelling of exhibits ( a help to the lay visitor, which was exasperatingly omitted in many sections in the Paris show)—these are serious, but not insurpassable problems, once a central committee has been established and a guarantee of funds procured. The French Government generously supported the *Salon du Livre*, and the Petit Palais was put at its disposal for a dignified and ample home. There is little chance of similar subsidy for a London exhibition, but by generous and immediate action in the publishing and allied industries it should be possible for the greatest publishing centre of the English speaking world to snatch an honour from a rival city which, unless some action is forthcoming, will most certainly be allowed to play host to the book-lovers of Europe in 1934. Yours, etc.,

The Monotype Corporation Limited.

PAUL BEAUJON.

43 & 44 Fetter Lane,  
London, E.C.4.

## SHAKESPEARE AND SIR THOMAS MORE

(To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY.)

SIR,—The Insurrection scene in the play of *Sir Thomas More* is now accepted by most critics and scholars as by Shakespeare, but it is not well-known, I think, that there is a fine passage in the manuscript of the play which Sir Edmund Chambers in his *William Shakespeare, a Study of Facts and Problems* is inclined to add to the main attribution. It consists

of a short speech which has been added as a pasted insertion by a copyist, and I feel no apology is needed for a full quotation :

MORE : It is in heaven that I am thus and thus  
 And that wch we prophanlie term o' fortune  
 Is the provision of the power above  
 Fitted and shapte just to that strength of nature  
 Wch we are born (withal) ; good God good God  
 That I from such an humble bench of birth  
 Should stepp as twere up to my Countries head  
 And give the law out ther ; I in my fathers lif  
 To take prerogative and tyth of knees  
 From elder kinsmen and him bynd by my place  
 To give the smooth and dexter way to me.  
 That owe it him by nature, sure thes things  
 Not physickt by respecte might turne o' blood  
 To much Coruption, but moore, the more thou hast  
 Either of honor office wealth and calling  
 Wch might accite thee to embrace and hugg them  
 The more doe thou in serpents nature thinke them,  
 Fear ther gay skins wth thought of ther sharpe state  
 And lett this be thy maxime, to be greate  
 Is when the thread of hazard is once spun  
 A bottom great wound upp greatly undonn . . .

As Sir Edmund says, the opening reminds us of Iago's " Virtue. A fig, 'tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus", while More's pun on his own name and the association of the adjectives " smooth and dexter " are characteristic. One remembers, too, Gratiano's " scarfed bark hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind." A closer study of the whole passage seems, however, to me to show Shakespeare's hand even more firmly, for after all, it was not Iago, but the " lean and hungry " Cassius who first speculated how we are " thus and thus" :

Men at some time are masters of their fate.  
 The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
 But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

And the after effects of ambition realised but " not physickt by respecte " are put in markedly similar terms by Brutus :

He would be crowned :—  
 How that might change his nature, there's the question

Fashion it thus ; that which he is, augmented, Would run to these and these extremities :

*And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,  
 Which hatched would as his kind grow mischievous,  
 And kill him in the shell.*

Taken singly, none of these parallels, except perhaps the last, would be completely convincing, but it seems to me that their cumulative force compels attention, giving as it does something of Shakespeare's language and metaphor, and of his turn of thought. The prosody of lines 4-8 appear to me to be masterly, and I can hardly resist the conclusion that Sir Edmund Chambers has made a find. Yet so far it seems to have escaped much attention.

Yours, etc.—

6, Linden Road, Bristol.

H. W. CRUNDELL.

THE LONDON MERCURY  
SIR LAWRENCE WEAVER

(*To the Editor of THE LONDON MERCURY*).

SIR,—As I am now completing a short life of the late Sir Lawrence Weaver, I shall be very grateful if such of your readers as may have characteristic letters of his, or any other material likely to be of assistance, would kindly allow me to have access thereto.

It has occurred to me that there are probably many amongst the readers of THE LONDON MERCURY who are in a position to be thus helpful.—Yours, etc.,

Romney's House,  
Hollybush Hill,  
London, N.W.3.

CLOUGH WILLIAMS-ELLIS.



RUTHENIAN CHURCH  
*Woodcut by M. L. WETHERED*

# BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES & NEWS

*Correspondence from readers on all subjects of bibliographical interests is invited. Our Correspondent will, to the best of his ability, answer all queries addressed to him.*

## GENERAL NOTES

A FEW months ago an appeal was issued which was of special interest to bibliophiles. The appeal was for a comparatively small sum of money—some £175, if my memory serves me right—needed for the purchase of a portrait of Anna Williams. This lady, who was born in 1706 and died in 1783, was blind, and was one of those to whom Dr. Johnson, because of his great charity, gave refuge in his house at 17 Gough Square. The portrait, which is an oil measuring twenty-four by twenty inches, is the work of Miss Frances Reynolds (1729-1807), Sir Joshua's sister, and it was at one time the property of James Boswell. Clearly, therefore, here is a work of extraordinary literary interest, especially as we know (on the authority of James Northcote, R.A.) that the likeness is a good one—though the picture is but amateurish in many ways. What could be more fitting than that this portrait should find a final home in that most delightful of London literary shrines, 17 Gough Square, Johnson's house in which he compiled the *Dictionary*, and that Miss Williams's likeness should hang (as is intended, I believe), in the very room which was hers? A good deal of the necessary money has already been raised, or promised, but further subscriptions are still needed, and they should be sent to Mr. Arundell Esdaile, The British Museum, Bloomsbury, London, W.C., who is organising the purchase. Are there no good Johnsonians, readers of these notes, who will help?

HAVING given the above little push behind the wheel of Mr. Esdaile's collecting cart, I must now proceed to answer his letter in last month's LONDON MERCURY—but the reply must be extremely brief. First as to the question of the use of the terms "edition," "issue," and "impression." My own view is in opposition to that of Mr. Esdaile. I wish to call any separate printing of a book a new edition, irrespective of whether the type has been reset, wholly, in part, or not at all. Otherwise, I feel, no one will know where to draw the line. What, for instance, is the right word to use when a solitary misprint is corrected? Or what, when one chapter is rewritten? But if you call every new printing a new edition, these questions do not arise, and one can qualify the word edition (when necessary or desirable) by an appropriate adjective such as "corrected," "revised" or "reset." The word "impression" I would discard altogether. The word "issue" I would retain for a definite and coherent subdivision of the edition—such, for example, as all those copies of an edition of an English-printed book which have a cancel-title inserted for sale through an American publisher. But I have no space to go into this point here at further length. As to Mr. Esdaile's final question, I do not know that I can quote an instance of the first "issue" (typographically speaking) of a book being sold to the public after the second "issue." But I can (through the kindness of my friend, Mr. P. H. Muir) give Mr. Esdaile something even more striking. Mr. Muir tells me that the entire first edition of Mr. Walter de la Mare's *Flora* was suppressed, and a second edition substituted and published. Some few years after, however, the original edition (which had not been destroyed) was sold by the publishers to a large bookselling firm as a "remainder" and put on the market at a low price. Therefore the edition first printed was actually sold some years later than the edition printed second. This, I think, proves my point

that such topsy-turveydom can occur—and probably has quite frequently occurred in the past. But my own view is that the first printed edition is the real “first edition”—just as in the melodrama the long-lost eldest son appears and is acclaimed as the rightful heir in the fifth act, even though the villain has swaggered unsuspected in his place for the four acts preceding.

A BOOK to be welcomed is Canon B. H. Streeter's *The Chained Library: A Survey of Four Centuries in the Evolution of the English Library*. (Macmillan. 25s.). This is one of those treatises on the physical shape of things, which, personally, I find so very attractive. Canon Streeter's subject is part of the history not only of learning and literature, but also of furniture and of architecture. He shows how, for more than four centuries, the design of libraries

was dominated by the practice of chaining books. A chained book cannot be read unless there is some kind of desk or table on which to rest it *within the length of the chain*; that fact conditioned the structure of the book-case. Again, since a chained book cannot be moved to the window, the window must be near the book; that determined the plan of the building.

Some thirty English libraries are described in more or less detail, and it is surprising to learn how late the practice of chaining persisted—for new chains were being purchased for the Bodleian as late as 1751, and there are still seven considerable libraries in England that have never lost their chains. Canon Streeter's book is very fully illustrated and this has necessitated (and this is my only complaint) its being printed upon that very shiny sort of paper which is so unpleasant both to the touch and to the sense of smell—and which, moreover, catches the light so very uncomfortably to the eyes as one reads. But I must not make too much of this, for the book is certainly a valuable contribution to knowledge, and contains not mere compilation, but the results of original research and observation.

#### NOTES ON SALES

MR. THOMAS HATTON'S collection, chiefly consisting of first editions of Dickens and other nineteenth-century authors, was sold by Messrs. Sotheby on November 30th and December 1st, and realized a total of £5,365. The chief item was a truly remarkable set of *Pickwick* in the original parts. This, which was said to be one of the finest sets in existence, sold for £1,480, at which price it was bought for an English private collector, whose name was not disclosed. This was by no means a record price for this book, but the comparison of one set of *Pickwick* with another is too highly specialised a business for me to attempt to draw any conclusions from the apparent decline in price.

A HIGHLY important book-auction, held on December 7th and 8th at Messrs. Sotheby's, was that of the library of the late J. C. Adams, of Sheffield. Nearly three hundred lots were sold, and they brought in a total of over sixteen thousand pounds. The highest price was £2,400, paid by the Rosenbach Company for the only known perfect copy of Thomas Lodge's romance, *Rosalind*, quarto, 1590. £2,300 was given for a very attractive German illuminated manuscript of the early fifteenth century. A first folio, 1623, of Shakespeare, with the three first leaves in facsimile, fetched £1,800, and a very good second folio, 1632, £350. Shakespeare's *Poems*, 8vo., 1640, sold for £550, but the eighteen quartos (nine of them of the very first importance, but mostly published before the Commonwealth period) brought in only disappointing prices. Milton's *Lycidas*, quarto, 1638, sold for £430. Altogether this was a very fine library, the existence of which was unknown to most people.

## ITEMS FROM THE BOOKSHOPS AND CATALOGUES

FROM the Rosenbach Company there has come the catalogue, called *Five Centuries of Bookmaking*, of an exhibition of "great examples" of book-production which is now being held at the firm's Philadelphia premises, 1320 Walnut Street. The closing day is January 16. The arrangement of the Catalogue is chronological, beginning with a couple of Block books, and ending with works published in 1931. About a hundred and fifty books are included—and I wish either geography or finance would allow me to see them. No prices are given in this list.

FOR a firm to issue its thousandth catalogue is a considerable event in its history, [and worthy of celebration. Messrs. James Tregaskis & Son, of 66 Great Russell Street, London, W.C., have just published *The One Thousandth Caxton Head Catalogue*, which is a medium-sized cloth-cased quarto, describing 164 picked items from the firm's stock. As a frontispiece there is a reproduction of a coloured drawing of the late James Tregaskis. It is dated 1917—about three years before I first met him—and seems to me to show a rather less genial-looking man than the one whose kindness I felt on many occasions, and to whom I shall always be grateful for, in particular, being my host at the Johnson Club on the first occasion upon which I dined there. But to return to the catalogue—there is an introduction, or *Prolegomenon* as he calls it, by Mr. A. Edward Newton, who tells in outline the story of the Caxton Head from its foundation at Birmingham by Robert Wilde, who issued his first catalogue in 1874. In 1881 the business was purchased by W. P. Bennett, who in 1885 moved it to 39 Great Russell Street. After Bennett's death his widow moved the shop to 232 High Holborn, and later she took for her second husband James Tregaskis, a Cornishman, who was born in the year 1850. Tregaskis was a printer, but in 1890 he joined his wife's bookselling business, and from that day until his death in November, 1926, he remained associated with the Caxton Head, which became under his direction one of the best known London firms, first at the Holborn address, and from March, 1915, at 66 Great Russell Street. The present head of the firm, is the son of James Tregaskis's second marriage, Mr. Hugh Tregaskis, and I trust that under his direction The Caxton Head will find the period between this and the fifteenth hundredth catalogue (to which Mr. Newton prophetically refers in his final paragraph) one of continued and increasing prosperity.

I. A. WILLIAMS

## BOOK-PRODUCTION NOTES

## THE GREGYNOG COMUS\*

**L**AST month I noted the Gregynog Press *Euripides* as being the last work printed at the Press by Mr. R. Maynard and his colleague, Mr. Horace Bray. The *Comus* is the first book to be produced at the Press under its new typographer. The colophon, printed on the verso of a fly-leaf at the end, runs thus:

THE FIRST BOOK ARRANGED BY WILLIAM MacCANCE, AND COMPLETED ON THE HAND PRESS ON THE ELEVENTH DAY OF JUNE, 1931, AT THE GREGYNOG PRESS, NEAR NEWTOWN, MONTGOMERYSHIRE. BLAIR HUGHES-STANTON COLLABORATED IN THE PRINTING, DESIGNED AND ENGRAVED THE WOOD BLOCKS. THE BOOK WAS SET BY HAND AND PRINTED BY IDRIS JONES. THE EDITION IS LIMITED TO 250 COPIES.

The poem is set in 12-point Garamond and printed on thick Japanese vellum with a page measuring about  $11 \times 6\frac{3}{4}$  inches. In this machine-driven age it is not easy to find a competent pressman for a hand-press; but nothing could be better than the press-work of these pages. Those who know Mr. Hughes-Stanton's engraved work, and especially those who have printed from his finely engraved wood-blocks, which have the black surface delicately engraved with the finest white lines, will appreciate the amazing skill with which Mr. Idris Jones has printed these illustrations. Most of them, it is true, have been printed separately from the text and are inset; but the two figures of Sabrina, printed respectively on the title-page and at the end of the poem, must have been printed in the type-formes, and are as cleanly and sharply printed as the larger subjects, printed separately. The book is substantially cased in bevelled paper boards with an ivory-tinted buckram back.

## AN ETCHED BOOK†

**I**F we seek a precedent for Mr. John Pride's *Quair of Sonnets*, we may go back to William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, for, like Blake, Mr. Pride has etched his own poems and decorated and printed them himself from the etched plates. Blake, however, etched his pages in relief, drawing his design in an impervious ink, and then etching out the whites, as is done in a modern zinco-graph; whereas Mr. Pride's etching has been done in the modern way with a needle on a coated plate, on which the design is left in intaglio after the acid has been applied and the coating removed. His book—a quarto, in which every leaf of the text is printed with an etching—is notable as a rare example of book-production, even apart from its literary and personal interest. Each of the poems, most of which begin and end on a single page, has its head-piece and, when space admits, a tail-piece also. Most of these are charming little landscapes; but some of them show how well Mr. Pride can draw men and women, and horses too.

**C**HRISTOPHER and Lettice Sandford write from the Boar's Head, Heather-combe, Devon, to point out that the title of their book, *The Magic Forest*, is misprinted *The Magic Flute* in my note last month.

B. H. NEWDIGATE

\* *Comus*. A Mask by John Milton. With a frontispiece and the six characters in costume designed and engraved in wood by Blair Hughes-Stanton. The Gregynog Press.

† *A Quair of Sonnets and Ballads*. Written and etched by John Pride. 71 Pembroke Place, Liverpool.



ULYSSES AND THE WOOERS (*Chapman's Homer*, xxi)  
through the Axes

At the first hole, flew the steele-charged arrow.

*Wood-engraving by JOHN FARLEIGH*

## A LETTER FROM ITALY

FLORENCE, December, 1931.

THE life of Gabriele D'Annunzio is so thronged with extraordinary experiences that an account of it might be given in the style of Marcel Schwob's *Vies Imaginaires*, where selected picturesque traits and anecdotes belonging to a dozen different people are telescoped into each other to form an imaginary character, the exponent of a whole period of history. What Gabriele D'Annunzio stands for is a matter on which opinions may still differ for a long time; but there is no denying that we find in him the quintessence of European fin-de-siècleism, side by side with a typical product of what is called *la terza Italia*, Italy of the period of King Umberto. According to the authors of the first full biography of D'Annunzio, Federico Nardelli and Arthur Livingston (London, Cape, 1931), D'Annunzio is not only the decadent who awoke one morning and found himself a warrior, but also the forerunner of Fascism, the leader, indeed, who would have accomplished everything Mussolini has done, if, instead of marching on Fiume he had marched on Rome. This hypothesis may supply a further chapter to the delightful recent collection of historical "if it had happened otherwise" essays (Longmans, 21s.); but the pages of Mr. Nardelli (who was D'Annunzio's Minister of Education at Fiume) enable us to guess what Italy would have been like if D'Annunzio had succeeded in establishing for a moment in Rome the government he created in Fiume. Pandaemonium is perhaps too mild a word for it. "Processions, martial music, singing, fireworks, and eloquence, eloquence, eloquence. . . ."—says Mr. Nardelli, half amused, half regretful that things should not have taken this turn throughout Italy. His picture of the brief Dannunzian rule in Fiume can be completed with Giovanni Comisso's *Il Porto dell'Amore* (first version of *Al Vento dell'Adriatico*): both books show that, whatever qualities of a petty ruler D'Annunzio displayed in the small Adriatic town, he would not have been equal to controlling a nation of forty millions.

Leaving aside unhistorical speculations of the "if" kind, one finds enough in Mr. Nardelli's book to explain why D'Annunzio may be considered a representative of fin-de-siècleism at its best as well as at its worst. But is the biographer really fair to the poet? All the scandals with which D'Annunzio's life teems are here laid bare, and detailed in a glib and facetious style (is this, we wonder, Mr. Livingston's personal contribution?) which one would think more suitable to a chatty talk or to cheap journalism than to an authoritative biography of a man who, for all his less pleasing sides, has been first of all a great poet. Is it fair to write a book on D'Annunzio where his poetry finds no place, where the reader is called to pronounce on the man, and on the man only? Had the authors of this biography possessed wit, as well as the information with which they are undoubtedly well equipped, they might have written something in the manner of Brousson's *Anatole France en pantoufles*. It is a pity that such wealth of material has not fallen into better hands.

There is a wide breach between D'Annunzio's mode of life and that of the young Italian writers of to-day. Their everyday lives are as a rule supremely unromantic. An English friend of mine who, possibly, had formed a picture of an ideal Latin writer of our time, all given to love adventures and bohemianism, was not a little astonished, upon coming in touch with young Italian writers, to find that most of them were hard workers and led very uneventful lives. He went to Milan; there he met Riccardo Bacchelli, the author of *Devil at Longbridge* and *Love Town*, who lives in a

bachelor flat overlooking an asphalt drive which until quite recently was a small picturesque river. Bacchelli uttered his complaint on the decay of picturesqueness in the Northern metropolis, and bitterly inveighed against the municipal administration which had deprived his windows of the view of the green water of the Naviglio that afforded a pleasant relaxation to his work of a historical researcher (he was busy writing, then, his *Congiura di Don Giulio d' Este*, an account—published this year—of a gruesome episode of the Court of Ferrara in the Cinquecento). My English friend also met Carlo Emilio Gadda, whose *Madonna dei Filosofi* shares with Cesare Zavattini's *Parliamo tanto di me* the first place in Italian humourist fiction; he was confronted with an electrical engineer so little infatuated with his literary success that he still hankers after his former profession although he has become a well-known writer. He met Giovanni Titta Rosa, poet and writer of short stories, one of the few Italian literary men who succeed in keeping a family only on the income of the literary profession; but how hard has he got to work just in order to make both ends meet! How different his surroundings from those of his great fellow-countryman, D'Annunzio! Instead of a luxurious house and a seraglio, a very modest flat and a thoroughly bourgeois family. This, of course, proves no handicap to Titta Rosa's imagination: in his recent *Varco nel Muro* he has written short stories in a manner of poetical realism which has already an established tradition in Italy and has produced lately a masterpiece, Corrado Alvaro's *Gente in Aspromonte* (the winner of the 1930 Stampa Prize).

In Florence my English friend found something nearer to Dannunzian splendour in Ugo Ojetti's magnificent villa, decorated and furnished in a taste far superior to D'Annunzio's *bric-à-brac* gaudiness: Il Salviatino overlooks the valley of the Affrico from the top of a Renaissance garden; such a place as one of those learned cardinals of the Cinquecento would have liked for his seat. Ojetti's habits, indeed, are in a way those of a Humanist: he, too, is a hard worker and cherishes the Petrarchan ideal of a secluded life, an ideal he would freely indulge, were it not for his exacting social duties as a member of the Italian Academy and a public orator. (It may be curious to note in this connexion that when D'Annunzio was sounded as to his probable attitude towards an election to the Italian Academy, he replied that a man of his red blood could not stand in line in a stable with a herd of donkeys.) Ojetti is the perfect modern incarnation of the Cinquecento type of literary man: the author of impeccable commemorative speeches, of epistles addressed to persons of importance (*Venti Lettere*, published this year, on momentous problems of culture, literature, the arts), of medallions of eminent people, both Italian and foreign, he has been meeting, where the entirely modern subtlety of psychological analysis is couched in the golden language of the best Italian tradition (*Cose Viste*, whose fifth volume is now out). But, apart from the scenery of the Salviatino, there is little that is romantic in Ojetti's life, in the sense D'Annunzio's life is romantic. Nor could my English friend find much to stimulate his imagination among the literary people he met in the offices of *Pègaso*, the monthly review edited by Ojetti. Here, again, the *décor* was magnificent: an old Florentine palace, with faded frescoes and Gothic vaults. Against this stately background moved somewhat shabby figures: Bruno Cicognani, the author of *Villa Beatrice*, a novel where the formula of the realist school of fiction is renewed with a personal touch of gloomy Tuscan temper. In everyday life, Cicognani is a lawyer and a hard-working one, too, in spite of his shaggy beard which gives him the look of a Corsican brigand. D'Annunzio used to despise Cicognani's profession: a little lawyer in a provincial town. The other people my English friend met at *Pègaso's* would not have caused even a moment's doubt as to their real character: Bonaventura

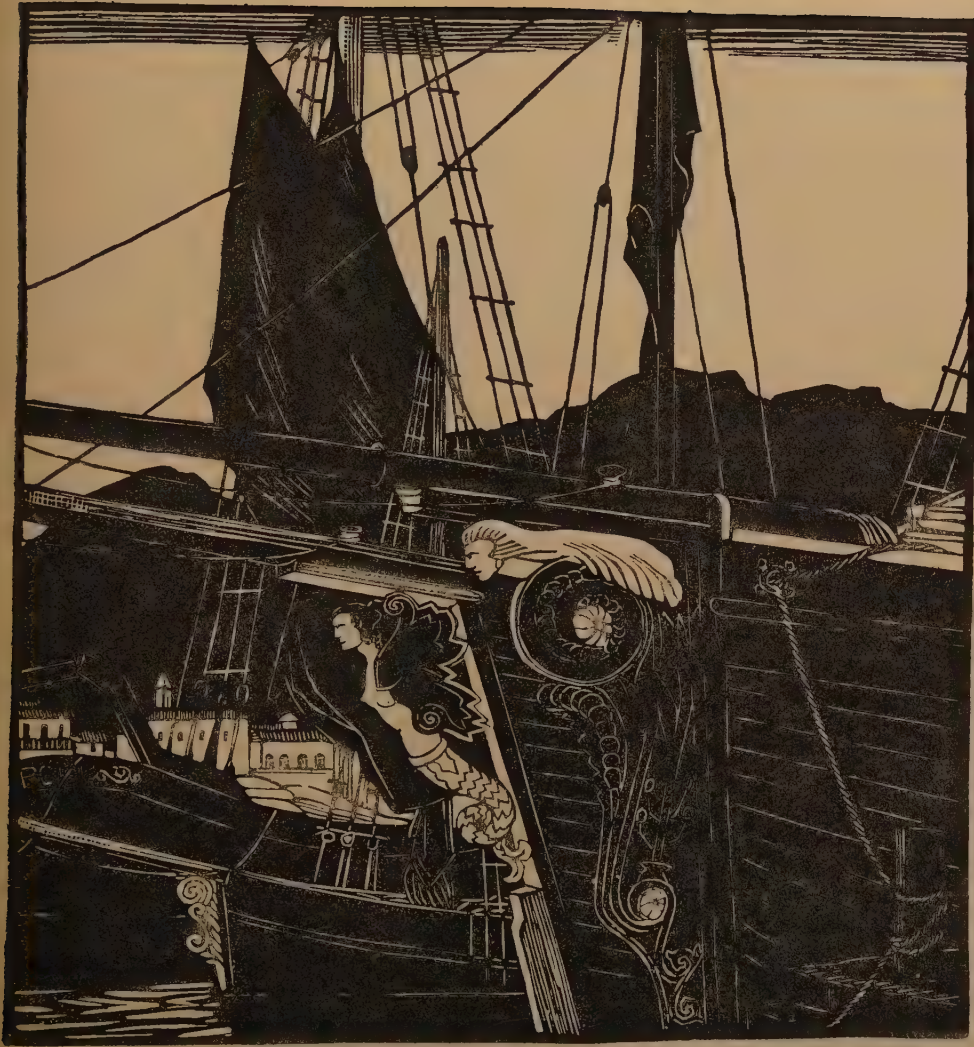
Tecchi, the novelist, and Pietro Pancrazi, the critic, both country squires living for great part of the year in out-of-the-way villages ; Bino Sanminiatielli, the author of *L'Urto dei Simili*, who, although belonging to the aristocracy, lives also in the country and has to rack his brain in order to squeeze a decent income out of farming (there is nobody whose visit Count Sanminiatielli dreads more than that of his own steward) ; and other even less romantic people, University professors, since Ogetti has a great respect for academic distinction.

Hoping to find a more bohemian atmosphere, my English friend consorted with the young writers belonging to the *Solaria* group, and meeting every night at a café in the main square of Florence, the "piazza natia," as it has been called by the most sedentary of them, Raffaello Franchi (Franchi's recent trip to Tunis in a sailing ship was looked upon by his friends with no less consternation than, by his neighbours, Kant's sudden change of habits at the news of the French revolution). Be it summer or winter, one is sure every night to come across there Eugenio Montale, the author of *Ossi di Seppia*, that landmark in Italian poetry of the last decade, and librarian of the world-famous Gabinetto Vieusseux ; Arturo Loria, the author of some of the best short stories of to-day, who earns his living at his father's big hat-manufactory ; Alberto Carocci, the editor of *Solaria*, a solicitor ; Alessandro Bonsanti, whose angelic face is hardly in keeping with his realistic tales of peasants and brigands : the least sedentary of this group being Loria, who has got in him some of the restlessness of the wandering Jew. But what a contrast these youths offer to D'Annunzio's corresponding period of life, when he was the lion of the Roman *beau monde* !

Rome, Rome itself, so deafened by quarrels and revels of literary people forty years ago, what does she afford now to an inquisitive foreigner in the way of literary gossip ? Emilio Cecchi lives a quiet family life ; if he goes to America, he goes there not in search of adventure, but to lecture on Sienese painters to University students ; Antonio Baldini, for all the Renaissance magnificence of the room in Palazzo Caetani where he is busy editing the *Nuova Antologia*, would be at a loss to discover something in his bourgeois life to match his surroundings ; Corrado Pavolini, the poet and co-editor of the *Italia Letteraria*, aspires to deserve a praise D'Annunzio did his worst to avoid, the praise due to a model *paterfamilias* ; Giuseppe Ungaretti, one of the two or three leading poets of to-day, is content, with Horace, to live in suburban seclusion at Marino ; even Alberto Moravia, who two years ago, with his novel *Gli Indifferenti*, cast such a lurid light on the morals of certain sections of the Roman middle class, is a Carthusian worker. And on to Naples ! But there my English friend saw the exact antithesis of whatever is Dannunzian in the person of Benedetto Croce, whose life is as regular and unromantic as a treatise of logic.

Summing up his general impression of this literary pilgrimage, my English friend remarked that the contrast between the dark clothes of the Italians and the dazzling sky of Italy seems to repeat itself between the sober bourgeois lives of the Italian writers and their romantic surroundings. To be sure, D'Annunzio's life has been an exception : such life, to use the poet's own words, is *inimitabile*. After having read Mr. Nardelli's book, one cannot help thinking how fortunate it is that it should be so.

MARIO PRAZ



ITALIAN HARBOUR  
*Woodcut by CICELY GRIFFITHS*

# CHRONICLES

## MUSIC

STRAVINSKY AND WALTON

**M.** STRAVINSKY arrived in London this time bringing with him, to practically the only one of the Courtauld-Sargeant Concerts with a programme of any special interest, two new works. The first was a Violin Concerto for Samuel Dushkin : a pretty toy for him to play with during the next two years or so in which he has the sole performing rights. Musically it has little interest, though it is both pleasant and amusing. The second aria of the second movement is the only real piece of beauty in the work, except for some nice sophisticated pieces of Russian orchestration. Stravinsky when talking about music instead of writing it, generally goes wrong. In this case he pronounced that the lot of the modern composer was so hard, as he could never allow himself repetition or the old-fashioned plain sonata-form development : each bar had to be a new and concise inspiration. This was manifestly untrue in the case of the Concerto ; though luckily it was the best pieces that were repeated.

Stravinsky's *Symphonie des Psaumes* was, on the other hand, a big new work. Stravinsky is a most fervent member of the Orthodox Church, and it was obvious that his subject was deeply felt.

The work is conceived more orchestrally than chorally, and is written like *Belshazzar's Feast* and Roussel's *Psalm* from the Jewish point of view. The choral writing is generally speaking very simple and weighty : the orchestral score does without violins and clarinets ; and adds to the usual forces heavy brass, and two pianos, which are most effectively used, particularly at the start. Both in his use of pianos and in the choral writing one is reminded of *Les Noces* more than any other of his works. They are both on the highest level of his inspiration.

The Symphony is in three movements, of which the second is a fugue, and the last part of the third on a ground bass. Undoubtedly, I think, the beginning and ending of the work are far the finest level of writing. The double fugue, though obviously finely felt and technically perfect, was too complex for the finer points of handling and orchestration to make themselves felt as they should ; and the mental confusion it produced spoilt the grand and austere simplicity of the main design. The austere triumph ending moves over a grand *passacaglia*-like bass, while the higher wind holds a shimmering texture of bell-effects, which is overwhelmingly beautiful and grand.

Stravinsky has very sensibly used the fine Latin of the Vulgate for his text ; thus rendering the work far more international. Other composers would do well to take the hint from this and from that fine work *Oedipus Rex*. Latin besides being an international language is extremely singable.

The symphony has been recorded, as well as one could expect for a work of this magnitude, by Columbia, and will be again performed in the new year at one of the B.B.C. Concerts.

The performance was if not bad at least not good. The Bach Choir performed the not difficult choral part quite adequately, though their leads were a trifle ragged. I cannot help feeling that Stravinsky had very definitely in mind the voice effects of a

Russian choir and their fine, unwavering volume of tone. This, of course, he could not get in England. I was glad, however, to see that the very necessary metal flutes were being used instead of the wooden ones.

It is about Mr. William Walton's age that many composers have produced their first big work. Mr. Walton has given us *Belshazzar's Feast*, which may indeed be regarded as a big achievement. His previous efforts in the larger manner, the *Sinfonia Concertante* and *Viola Concerto*, though extremely good and lively music have not been completely original or entirely and directly successful : but *Belshazzar's Feast* is a big, fine work with an immediate appeal for all, though the music must be spoken of as "modern," so obvious are its lines and aims, and so full of vitality that no one need fear complete lack of understanding even at a first performance.

The music moves very swiftly and is lit up by brilliant orchestral and choral writing—the orchestra including an organ and two extra fanfares of brasses and two extremely effective wooden "flappers" which are perhaps Mr. Walton's own invention? Mr. Walton was at one time a member of the Christchurch, Oxford, Choir : he has assimilated to an extraordinary degree the art of choral writing : the writing of *By the Waters of Babylon* is exceedingly beautiful : and though discords in the modern manner are formed by the voices, they are only arrived at as in Byrd or Purcell by the crossing or clashing of two perfectly straightforward parts.

There are some brilliant swaggering recitatives for solo male voice : a magnificently lively, almost jazzy chorus, "Praise ye the god of brass," etc., which lends itself to orchestral joking—a practice hallowed by Handel, Bach and Purcell, and a superb and *fortissimo* last chorus.

The only real criticisms I can find to make are that the ending on orchestra alone after full chorus, brass and organ is not loud enough or sufficiently exhilarating : perhaps the use of full organ with reeds would keep it boiling. There is also a passage where sopranos and altos sing high E and F sharp together very loud, which I don't believe would ever sound as it was intended, chorally speaking.

There are many effective tricks in the work—the *fortissimo* staccato shout of "slain" answering the solo voice, the soft long run on the word "concubines," and the magnificent momentary soprano appoggiatura in the last chorus to add to the excitement when it appears impossible to increase the noise by any ordinary means.

Mr. Walton has been exceedingly well served by his librettist, Mr. Osbert Sitwell, who has selected words from the Bible with a most unusual ear for their singability. He was not well served by the performance, which was below moderate : the rehearsal on the previous night had gone far better. Mr. Boult for some reason lost his nerve, kept his head in the score, conducted incessantly with both arms and actually let the *bâton* fly from his hand at one moment. The result was that though the orchestra played manfully, the choir sang more like a pack of wilting Nancies than a mob of exultant Jews ; they hesitated on their leads, mouthed their words and forgot to give the superbly calculated attack on such words as "PRAISE" in which they had been carefully drilled the night before. This was all the more a pity as I remember that while writing *Belshazzar* Mr. Walton expressed great admiration for the magnificent "open" singing of the Scala Company's recording of Verdi's *Requiem*. The choral parts need the hard, open blare of Italian voices singing *fortissimo* and a male soloist with a voice like a trumpet. I am sure Mr. Walton had this tone in mind—I only wish he had got it. However, the work has an international appeal and I shall hope to hear of several foreign performances in the near future—possibly the words might be translated into Latin by the distinguished librettist. I should dearly love to hear a record of it by the La Scala Company.

VERE PILKINGTON

## THE GRAMOPHONE

**F**IRST a complaint : that an expensive gramophone is very easily the most hideous of domestic objects. I was lately sent a catalogue of Brunswick models the cheapest of which would be not unworthy, in design, of the principal tomb of a French provincial cemetery ; but the more expensive, and regularly as the models mounted in price, threw off the decorum of the grave and for every extra ten pounds added a fresh patch of shoddy fret-work, a fresh affluence of Art, until of the ultimately expensive gramophone it can safely be said that there is no room, no room even in the French provinces, which would not be the uglier for its presence.

Their records, however, leave little to complain of. The highbrow can still complain that for gramophone purposes certain composers do not exist, but the gaps are quietly being filled, and he must remember that they are able to be filled only because, of the average music-lover's world, the centres are still Londonderry and Puccini's Bohemia. Some of the gaps most ably filled are in the Bach collection. H.M.V. have made excellent recordings of the *Sonata* for unaccompanied violin, No. 5, in C mi. (DB 1768-70), played by Yehudi Menuhin, and of the *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin* in D mi. (DB 1422-24)—since both works are for solo violin it seems odd to make a distinction in the labelling—played by Adolf Busch.

Master Menuhin's playing is extremely attractive ; its freshness and ease discount an unavoidable lack of grip, notably in the Fugue, since he is lucky enough to be able to record, not only a mature technique, but his own discovery, for he is no more than fifteen, of music. This makes his playing of Bach a complete contrast to that of Herr Busch, who is probably the profoundest living interpreter of violin music. His performance of the D mi. sonata is magnificent, but there is no denying that it is an ungrateful work. The Chaconne, in particular, takes the same unfair advantage of the head that cheap music takes of the heart. Both sonatas are impeccably recorded, and so is the *Air*, misleadingly labelled as from a Suite for Orchestra, which fills the odd side of a *Sinfonia* in B flat ma. by J. C. Bach (D 1988-89). The "suite" is actually an arrangement of Mahler's, and the *Air* is that commonly known as the Air on the G string. J. C. Bach's *Sinfonia* is an enchanting work, played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York under Mengelberg ; it is worth buying for the slow movement alone.

The L.S.O. under Albert Coates have made an effective, though rather noisy, record of Moussorgsky's *Nuit sur le Mont Chauve* (H.M.V. D 2010)—one of the best examples of orchestral devilry—and for the same company Chaliapine has made a record of Farlaf's Rondo from *Russlan and Ludmila*, and the Miller's Song from *Roussalka* (DB 1530), neither of which songs has the smallest merit and both of which are good recordings. The most important Columbia records of late have been the Stravinsky *Symphonie des Psaulmes* (LX 147-49), a work of first-rate importance which, except for the Double Fugue, comes out surprisingly well on the gramophone, and the Dvorak Quintet in A (LX 150-53), played by the Lener Quartet and Mme. Loeser-Lebert. There is no more tuneful and charming piece of chamber-music in the nineteenth century than the Quintet, which is one of Dvorak's last works.

There are no operatic records of importance. Columbia have recorded the Miserere from *Il Trovatore* in English, coupled with the Quartet from *Rigoletto* (DX 302) ; the words are badly translated, and the English voices too sweet, as compared with the singing by Ponselle and Martinelli of the former air (H.M.V. DB 1199)—a record so loud that it is tolerable only with a fibre needle.

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

## FICTION

RESULTS OF AN ACCIDENT. By VICKI BAUM. Geoffrey Bles. 7s. 6d.

APARTMENTS TO LET. By NORAH HOULT. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

FIRST PERSON SINGULAR. By W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

SO LOVERS DREAM. By ALEC WAUGH. Cassell. 7s. 6d.

THE enthusiasm accorded to the first work translated and published over here of Miss Vicki Baum's was observed by some with a faint misgiving. Was it justified? Did the author show a hint of lasting, deeper quality? The answer has appeared in *Results of an Accident*. In this novel Miss Baum has triumphantly proved to the pessimists that her deserts are very big indeed. It is a novel that no one could read without a very great measure of enjoyment, and one that critics must immediately recognise to be of a high order of beauty and distinction. It is a marked advance on *Grand Hotel*, the inspiration of which was drawn from much more obvious sources, in spite of the human understanding it displayed. In this new book the interest of the reader is as surely evoked, but for a finer end; and the author's own personality has responded, equally, to this touch. Both are, therefore, moved more deeply and sublimer truths are touched.

Briefly what happens is this: A large touring car, containing a rubber magnate, a film star and a famous boxer, comes to grief on the road-side near a small, secluded, German country town: in this town life has been going on in the usual stagnant round, that is so often depicted for us, of such provincial spots. The arrival of these three injured people, from the great metropolitan world outside, each of whom is taken in and nursed by different householders, creates a psychological disturbance that unbalances everybody. It will be at once seen that this theme bears a resemblance, in material substance, to that of *Grand Hotel*. The author collects a handful of people, almost at random, and then proceeds to dissect them. But whereas the people in a big hotel present a somewhat drab and obvious collection, those, in these circumstances, are as varied and as full of potential dramatic interest as is possible. Thus the story is a tremendously enriched one, and of infinitely more moving character. These three—though the chauffeur, who is killed, should be included in the category—hit the town much as the comet hits the world in Mr. H. G. Wells's fantasy, *In The Days of the Comet*; and the mental disturbance is profound. But, in reality, though that is the story, the effect of this disturbance on two of the characters is the real object and beauty of the book—which is, of course, a perfectly proper proportion. It is the business of a novel to present a main interest to the reader and surround it by proportionately subsidiary affairs. So, though the death of the chauffeur has the effect of tipping over the factory workers into a spasm of Bolshevik disaffection, and the presence of the boxer in the house of the local manufacturer, and the film-star in that of the landowner, causes these two bitter enemies to become on speaking terms again, the drama which eventually holds the book and uplifts it to the height of a fine achievement is the unfolding of the temptation of the doctor's wife, Frau Elizabeth Persenthein's, to escape at all costs from her life of slavery into however short a glory, with Peter Karbon, the rich rubber king. Elizabeth's gentle, self-abnegating character, Peter's admiration of her and his (however worldly) really generous impulse to give her a better time are worked out with a gradual, sympathetic and accurately visualised amount of detail that is clearly the work of a mind with a genius for novel

writing. Here is no mere gross seduction, in the ordinary sense of that word, : their affair is the almost inevitable result of their juxtaposition. And the doctor, Elizabeth's husband, is a study of a self-engrossed man which would stand comparison with any of the greatest works of fiction.

It is not easy to illustrate the writing in a work that is a translation from the original language, but a phrase like the following will show the sure touch of an imaginative mind in illuminating points to be stressed. :

" I must finish writing that letter to Michael," he thought. Michael was his brother, the senior partner in the tyre-works, and, since the morning, Peter had been pushing forward that letter, like a wheelbarrow full of stones.

And this is a passage between Nick (Elizabeth's husband) and his wife when they are alone together, discussing what has come over her :

" Don't you really know that you are everything to me, everything, everything in the world, that you are the mainspring, the very centre of my existence—even if I forget to help you into your coat—Elizabeth ? "

Like a tight-rope dancer, he was acutely conscious how carefully he must move, how excessively dangerous was his position, how the entire future depended on the way he acted in this decisive hour between dawn and sunrise. Elizabeth's hair smelt of fire and bitterness. She had become quite transparent, lying there on the pillow, with the little branding mark of forbidden kisses on her lips.

" He's going to marry you ? " he asked, carefully. " But, my child, even if a woman is married to a man, she can still be his mistress. Do you think you have any talent for that sort of thing ? Do you know what kind of woman you are ? "

A cruel question, perhaps ; but Dr. Persenthein understood. In spite of his absorption in his work, his utter disregard of his wife's plight, her lonely, overdriven life, he knew better than she did the real nature of the alternatives open to her.

Miss Norah Hoult's new novel shows her, once again, as a ruthless exponent of the lives of some of her own sex. In *Poor Women* she dealt exclusively with this subject ; in *Time, Gentlemen, Time* she drew also the unlovely picture of a drunken husband in conjunction with a wife's deterioration in such company. In this new book she has both men and women, but the women are the main theme. In a London lodging-house, where " apartments " are let off to city workers, we have the landlady, the two young ladies on the first floor, and the two gentlemen on the second, and it is a gloomy picture. But it is only too tragically like the actual possibilities in such a situation. Josephine Moore is morbid and suppressed, and, finally, becomes full of insane fancies ; Lena Crossley is lively and matter-of-fact, and makes her life as sensational as she dare ; Leonard Willoughby is young and an enthusiast with an idealistic love-affairs ; Mr. Hobson has shrunk and withered so completely into bachelorhood that there is practically nothing of him left alive but his skin and bones ; while pervading all their lives moves the grim figure of the grasping, self-centred Mrs. Peabody, their landlady. It is just a mixed bag picked out at random from any crowd ; but Miss Hoult makes them comprehensible and even, at times, moving to read about. Poor Josephine is infinitely pathetic, Lena excites admiration by her courage and warm heart, Leonard we are forced to smile at and love for his youth and resilience, Mr. Hobson we merely pity, while Mrs. Peabody causes only active disgust . . . though even she, perhaps, might not have been so bad in other circumstances. There is so much truth to life and human nature in this story that its dark, depressing side cannot be upheld as an unfavourable quality. Many people may wish to avoid it ; but in that case they can easily do so.

In *First Person Singular* Mr. Somerset Maugham also sets out the truth, and exposes it, as it were, without comment. These short stories are all little glimpses into people as they are, without any dressing up or pretences. They may not be fine or prepossessing people, always, but they are utterly truthfully displayed. And Mr. Maugham's pen is a brilliant weapon for the purpose : such vivid and competent writing is a pleasure to read in itself.

There is a vogue in titles going round among novelists that, if they did but know it, is not only a disadvantage to the general public but a very grave disadvantage to themselves. It is the habit of giving their novels titles that are mere vague phrases which have no power to fix themselves in the memory, and which one will certainly not be capable of repeating to anybody in a few months' time. An example of this practice is the title of Mr. Alec Waugh's new novel : it does not fit the book particularly and might just as well belong to any other novel, and moreover it creates no sort of mental label. One might just as well try and live in a street called, "So Pavement Stones Are Laid," and expect one's friends to carry it about in their heads and not to be for ever ringing up to know what the name of the confounded street one lives in really is. *So Lovers Dream* is an account, so personally told, of a successful novelist's love-affairs, that it is a pity it was not written in the first person. It would have made much better reading. The constant recurrence of sentences beginning with the personal pronoun "He" becomes even more monotonous than would have been the continual starting off of a sentence with the pronoun "I." The latter one may forgive for its unavoidable necessity. But an example of what the "He's" look like on Mr. Waugh's page, all from consecutive sentences, will show how the former annoys the eye and ear :

*He* entered lively upon a Tammany debate. *He* did not believe, he said, that New Yorkers realised, (etc., etc). *He* thought clearly. *He* talked clearly. *He* felt well and happy. *He* was all in. *He* sat forward : his head rested on his hands. *He* was lunching with a Congressman, (etc., etc). *He* did not know whether congressmen served liquor or did not. *He* was a democrat and a wet. [The italics are mine.]

But apart from these criticisms, which are superficial, the novel is a distinctly interesting and readable one ; though Mr. Waugh might have done some useful elimination of first hastily sketched thoughts. A lot of the text reads as if it has been dictated and left at that. This is inartistic in a book, and Mr. Waugh is too good an artist not to know better. A serious criticism ; and it is a great pity that such a fault is apparent, as there is a lot of serious thinking expressed here upon a topical subject, namely, the effects of their emancipation upon the women of America from all the old valuations of conduct and expediency, in morals and behaviour. Mr. Waugh's thoughts, as they come through to us in this book, are worth having. He deals with the situation he writes about with original sympathy and insight ; and original thought on these points is what is wanted and is very valuable. He tries to explain the apparent inconsistencies of the spoilt woman with whom the hero of his story is in love as being an explicable and natural result of the times in which she lives ; and he tries to see them as, even, a possible and not disastrous outcome of the times. All this is admirable. If only it had been presented more selectively it might have been such a very much better book. The descriptions of life in New York and on the Côte d'Azur are remarkably clear and vivid ; the characters are all alive, and so is their background.

J. E. S. ARROWSMITH

## BELLES-LETTRES

A TENEMENT IN SOHO. By GEORGE THOMAS. With an Introduction by JOHN OXENHAM. Jonathan Cape. 7s. 6d.

THE COUNTRY CHILD. By ALISON ATTLEY. Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d.

VISIBILITY GOOD. By E. V. LUCAS. Methuen. 6s.

A COTSWOLD BOOK. By H. W. TIMPERLEY. Illustrated by L. S. LOWRY. Jonathan Cape. 8s. 6d.

NIGERIAN SKETCHES. By E. F. G. HAIG. Allen & Unwin. 6s.

A REFUGE FROM CIVILISATION. By R. JONES-BATEMAN. Arnold. 6s.

WANDERINGS. By ARTHUR SYMONS. Dent. 8s. 6d.

**A** *TENEMENT IN SOHO* is a remarkable book in the fact that it is a chronicle of conditions and incapacity that seem incredible. The author, son of a dustman and one of a family of seven, four of whom are housebound by muscular atrophy, has been a victim of the disease since the age of sixteen, but, through the encouragement of wise friends, he has occupied himself with mental activity and there is a surprising absence of bitterness in his narrative.

But to the reader there is something pitifully tragic in the spreading and inevitable weakness occasioning falls and an utter dependance on anyone disposed to help, and in the heartbreaking realisation of coming, complete inability.

Here is tragedy, yet in conditions that could be alleviated.

Helpless in a condemned house : having to endure the partial demolition while in occupation : the mother bedridden : the author just managing to transport himself from room to room by dragging himself along on a chair. The only daughter weakened by the disease and another son marked down ; and very few seemingly concerned ! For the sake of a small emolument the needy family attend a hospital to serve as specimens for the students. The author continues :

One remark the specialist made has stuck in my memory ever since. He said, " You know, Mrs. Thomas, you ought to feel proud of having opened up this case to the medical world ! " I would cheerfully have strangled him for that remark.

Though reading with a sense of outrage we cannot help admiring the fortitude with which the author—struggling for hours at musical composition—faces the family misfortune. How many in his circumstances would have his determination to " get a plum from the pie of life " ?

Mr. Thomas's diary is, as he intended it to be, a full length portrait. As far as style is concerned it leaves much to be desired, but as a document it throbs with an unconscious exposition of working class mentality ; with the squalor of slum life and the various inhabitants of a tenement block, and as much of the outside world—consisting of a noisy market street—as can be seen by a cripple from a second floor window, touched in with a vivid accuracy. Provocatively interesting to those not satisfied with social conditions, and an unintended condemnation of the general unconcern for unwarranted distress, here is a book that posterity will undoubtedly look in and, we hope, wonder at.

As in the preceding book the background of *The Country Child* is convincing in its

complete authenticity. The country child is Susan Garland, born in a remote farmhouse situated on a lonely and bleak crag. Being an only child she grows up fanciful and impregnated with an awe of nature which often turns into fear. The ingredients of the book are obvious, and its tone rarely rises above a comfortable placidity, quietly humorous at times, but its merit lies in its intimate depiction of a variety of childhood that is unfortunately passing. Child-life with all its lore and legends, rhyming games and folk superstitions is being superseded by cynical Americanisms. Our babies are O.K. almost before they are out of their cradles, and even rustic children seem born under the influence of that nasal planet, the Cock-Eyed World. Here is the charm of unsophisticated childhood, wholesome and natural, bound to discoveries by the beauty of a simple wonder, and Mr. Attley succeeds in bringing back to us the unashamed youngness of the English child that Our Gang seems to have dissipated.

The invigorating vividness of the wrapper and covers of *Visibility Good* is a foretaste of what is inside. Mr. Lucas seems to have discovered the secret of entertainment. He pleases with his welcome satires; amazes with his knowledge—as diverse almost as an encyclopedia—and satisfies with a serene benevolence—and the wine of life is clearer for it. Merlin, William of Orange, Andronicus of Cyrrhus, Mr. Cornelys, Gunnar of Lithend, John Ridd, and Umslopogaas he takes in his stride whilst discoursing on such subjects as the V and A, Weathercocks, On Fighting Against Odds, and London Squares. He says in one of his essays,

. . . to me this world has done a power of good . . . and every year it grows wider instead of smaller.

One cannot imagine what else there is for him to discover.

Mr. Timperley has a vivid sense of natural description and to read *A Cotswold Book* is to be with him, seeing what he has seen, walking where he has walked, and appreciating and being gladdened by all that has delighted and, I guess, comforted him; and if one feels justified in charging him with a little tiresomeness in places, due to the repetition of detailed descriptions of hedgerows and their banks, it is not a very serious complaint. He is best when he is on the top of the hills alone with the sky and the prehistoric barrows and earthworks, absorbed in a sympathy with his world and having:

A feeling of happiness and well-being within you as though a spirit, calm in a deeper serenity than the unaided mind can know, enters your own, almost imperceptibly at first, but strengthening its influence the farther the plain falls behind, until it possesses you so completely that it holds you for ever. It comes as an enrichment of experience, it remains as an enlargement of daily life.

This pantheistical fervour is very keen throughout and under its influence the merit of the writing is high. But down on the lower ground he is delightfully discursive in a way that denotes the true country lover. He begins many of his chapters with the intention of taking his readers on a certain way, but he is tempted from his path by bird songs, flowers, light and shade, and the reaction of earth to the sky, and then, towards the end, he suddenly recollects that he has strayed and really ought to finish the walk as he began. He is penetratingly enthusiastic without being sentimental, and always remains sanely appreciative and his love has a deep and serious strength:

The guide-post on Crickley Barrow has arms for six ways—but, by its poise and situation, it shows a seventh way for the imagination as clearly as it shows six for the feet.

Of a different calibre are *Nigerian Sketches*. Here, as in the preceding volume, the spirit of the place comes out on every page, but Mr. Haig, strange as it may seem, has succeeded in making Nigeria appear more populous and bustling with government

officials and their attendant blacks than the Cotswold country does with its labourers. He makes the jungle seem quite a homely place with his amusing, occasionally dramatic, informative and always entertaining anecdotes. The chapter on Twenty-Four Hours is a vivid account of an isolated Britisher's reactions to the experiences of an African day ; from the invigorating dawn in the season of the cool and sinewy harmattan, through the long trek to distant courthouse with its unpleasant proximity of naked blacks over which he must preside :

The crowd trickled muddily forward, naked and hungry looking, darkening the entrance with their serried blackness and diffusing a vaguely unpleasant odour. The sight and the scent of them insinuated into Wintern's consciousness a gross and animal flavour, plunging him for a few seconds into a reverie of depression. Blackness and nakedness—they made the psychological curse of this country. Nudity inviting lust, and flaunting at the same moment the picture of its simple sordidness : blackness overshadowing the mind and senses lending a demoniac sinister taint to animal desire. Women revealing to the world every secret of their sex, and thereby extinguishing the mystic quality of woman's loveliness : men of every age and condition going nude and smirching the heroic tradition of statuary and athletes. There was only one consolation : a world of black nakedness might be depressing, but a world of white nakedness would be intolerable.

Then after a tiring day the cool relaxation of night when, for a change, because of the season, a tired man can snuggle down into blankets and fall asleep with a passing regret for a companion rendered desirable by his manhood and memory ! One turns the last page of a very readable book with a feeling of regret.

Now to Ceylon. Mr. Jones-Bateman is evidently not of that evangelistic company which thinks of Ceylon as the place " where every prospect pleases and only man is vile." Having first-hand knowledge, which no facility for rhyming can better, he has recorded his experiences of the Wannu district of Ceylon in *A Refuge From Civilisation* and one reads with delight of the innocent, honest, and guileless people who occupy that administration. Thriftless yet friendly, lazy but honest, their naïveté endears them to everyone. The essay on Laziness inspired by them is delightfully contrived : and the Chronicles of U—— which make the latter part of the volume are amusingly and cleverly satirical and render the note in the Preface concerning them unnecessary.

*Wanderings* is a disappointing book. True to its title, it strikes one, if I may so put it, as being published in the rough. It has many irritating repetitions, almost word for word ; there is a perpetual scuffle for comparisons and recollections ; references that seem intrusive and irrelevant ; and a discipleship of Baudelaire that is not very illuminating. From sightseeing at Tonnerre one is suddenly and disconcertingly transported to Berlin or Venice, which motion leaves one breathless. Covering the years 1890 to 1925 the journal might have been tremendously interesting—for Mr. Symons has appreciated life—but as it is, it is too discursive. To quote the author against himself :

. . . the tangles of the way, the continual arresting of one's attention by some balcony, doorway, or window, or by those sombre and sinister and attractive men and women whom one passes, overhearing their words, noticing the various tones of their voices—all this, and more than this, puts a strain upon one's eyes and begins after a time to tire and stupefy the brain.

The limpid simplicity and concentration of the essay, *Aspects of Kent*, make it the best in the book and really meritorious. The illustrations by G. E. Chambers leave nothing to be desired.

WILLIAM GIBBINS

# LITERARY HISTORY & CRITICISM

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT BURNS. Edited from the originals by J. DE LANCEY FERGUSON. The Clarendon Press, Oxford. Two volumes. 30s.

DOSTOEVSKY: A NEW BIOGRAPHY. By EDWARD HALLETT CARR. With a Preface by D. S. MIRSKY. Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.

NOTES ON THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY. By NOWELL CHARLES SMITH. Oxford University Press. 5s.

INTRODUCTIONS TO JANE AUSTEN. By JOHN BAILEY. Oxford University Press. 6s.

FOLKWAYS IN THOMAS HARDY. By RUTH A. FIROR. Oxford University Press (For University of Pennsylvania Press). 12s. 6d.

NO matter how clearly the picture of a man may emerge from his other writing, a good collection of his letters will throw new light on his character. The degree of light depends to some extent upon the completeness of the collection and the wisdom and candour of the editor; but letters are always revealing, and any man shows quite different sides of his personality when writing to formal acquaintances, to friends, to relatives, to the lady—or ladies—of his choice, and to tradesmen. Burns was no exception in this respect; and many people will be grateful to Mr. Ferguson for giving us these two ably edited volumes of Burns' letters—the most complete collection now available.

After an excellent introduction, the letters are presented without comment except for necessary explanations concerning the condition of the originals. Footnotes are rare and unobtrusive. Glossary, appendix (notes on Burns' correspondents), bibliography and index are adequate and well arranged. Not all of the letters are interesting in themselves; which, of course, is to be expected. Many of them are stilted and extravagant, after the fashion of the times; and this, too, is to be expected. But the proportion of dull or pompous letters is surprisingly high; and one might reasonably expect more humour and less of sadness and despair:

. . . They have been six horrible weeks; anguish and low spirits made me unfit to read, write, or think.

I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns a commission; for I would not *take in* any poor wretch by *selling out*. Lately I was a sixpenny private, and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough; now I march to the campaign, a starving cadet; a little more conspicuously wretched.

I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice.

Thus he wrote to Mrs. Dunlop; and there are many other letters to remind us that his short life was not a happy one. Dissipation alone did not shorten that life. Burns had more than his share of ill health. The letters prove this, and serve to defend a poet who needs some defence from the legends which have grown up round him.

Taking up another book immediately after finishing the letters of Robert Burns, it is with a faint sense of shock that one encounters the young Fyodor Dostoevsky reading "the whole of Scott," in one summer at the age of twelve, "if we may

believe the testimony of a letter written by him in the last year of his life," his biographer says sceptically. Why not believe it? As a feat of reading, it is by no means impossible; and it makes the world seem comfortably small to picture the young Fyodor and his brothers on the farm at Darovoe, reading Sir Walter Scott and playing games inspired by *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Last of the Mohicans*.

In his preface to Mr. Carr's book, Prince Mirsky is vigorous, both in praise and disagreement. One detects (or imagines) much between the lines of his suavely intelligent writing, and remembers this later in reading the book. Not all readers of Dostoevsky's novels can be in perfect agreement with Mr. Carr's estimates of them, but it is difficult to imagine one who could not read his biography with lively interest.

Dostoevsky's life offers any biographer ample material for a novel. Without undue popularizing, Mr. Carr takes advantage of this. He also shows an admirable sense of proportion in handling the varying elements of biography. One or two things are annoying, but they are trivial. By accident or design, sometimes he repeats small incidents—possibly to remind the reader. If the reader happens to remember what has gone before, this is mildly disturbing. And there is the frequent use of the word "tendencious." Even if one liked it the first time, it might become monotonous. It strikes a false note in a style usually clear and unpretentious. The very excellence of the book makes these trivial things stand out too sharply.

The chief excellence lies, as Prince Mirsky points out, in the analysis of Dostoevsky's religious development, the explanation of the nature of his Christianity, and in tracing the origin of his specific character types. As a biographer, Mr. Carr is notable for his skill, not only in the way he makes his characters live, but for a quality of suspense. If this is not clear, remember the legendary reader of Ludwig's *Napoleon*—the lady who said, "Sshhh . . . don't tell me, I haven't finished it yet." Even one who has had a little advance information can become quite excited reading Mr. Carr's account of the writing of the novels, and very impatient to reach his climax—*The Brothers Karamazov*.

After that, it is necessary to pause and catch the breath before approaching *Notes on The Testament of Beauty*. It is possible that anything concerned with this poem should be approached in a spirit of reverence, inspired by respect for Robert Bridges. Unfortunately, a good many people find it easier to respect his achievement than to enjoy reading his last poem. Those who failed to enjoy *The Testament of Beauty* because of its allusiveness will find Mr. Smith's book very helpful. Those who failed to enjoy it for other reasons will find the same difficulty in appreciating these notes. For instance, there is this note on lines 505-6:

Another obscure sentence. The "clash of arms and yell of battle" vibrates to this day in "the unsearchable storage of Earth's high firmament." What is this? The general sense is evidently that the wars of Hun and Teuton were celebrated in "sagas and epic rhapsodies" (l. 499) which still live; as he says just below, "with the sword followed the song, an inextinguishable paean of battle and blood." The picture suggested by "the unsearchable storage of Earth's high firmament" is that of storm clouds stored with thunder, lightning and rain. But what is it that is thus metaphorically described? The poetry of poetic traditions of European literature? The racial movements and strife, which still continue and may be traced back to the invasion of the Huns? Or is Bridges merely expressing in high-flown language the physical dogma that no vibration can ever entirely cease? If so, it must be admitted that he is indulging in a whimsical irrelevance. Does "unsearchable" mean "inexhaustible"?

It may be unfair to quote this one passage, and yet it gives some idea of the general plan, and there are many similar to it. After a brief preface, biographical note, and

introduction the book is given over to this almost line by line dissection of the poem. Students in our own time, and in time to come, may find this book an exceedingly useful reference, not only for its explanation of the allusions, but for its interpretation of the poem's philosophy. And yet, if the poem needs so much explanation now, one wonders what the verdict of future generations will be, wonders perhaps more than about most contemporary writing.

Such doubts need not beset us about Jane Austen. On her, we have the verdict of several generations, and if her stature is not great, and if she is not universally known and loved, the wealth of affection from those who do love her is great enough. Reading Mr. Bailey's Introductions is like walking through the woods with an old friend on a beautiful autumn day, when the talk is good and the sun is mellow. He writes so pleasantly, so easily, of Jane Austen, that she seems to walk beside you, a live, delightful person. (Jane in stout shoes? Of course not—but garbed in flounced frivolity, for the immortals are above strong boots and tweed.)

These introductions were written for the Georgian Edition of her works, which appeared in 1927, and are reprinted here. The final introduction, to *Lady Susan* and *The Watsons*, has been enlarged to include *Love and Friendship* and *Sanditon*, which were not in the Georgian Edition. A short study of her life and letters has been added. In his preface, Mr. Bailey says that his object has not been to make discoveries—he doubts if there are any to make—or to display learned research about sources and parallels, but to share his enjoyment with others. In this, he succeeds admirably. But Mr. Bailey is no blind worshipper. His critical vision remains quite clear, and he discusses Jane Austen's faults as well as her virtues with fairness and detachment. Evidently he did not approve of the publication of *Lady Susan* merely because it had not been published before :

However, as things turned out, we have got *Lady Susan* and, as it is there, it is difficult perhaps not to include it in editions of Jane Austen. There is no harm in reading it, and not much good.

To call this volume of introductions a pleasant little book is not to dismiss it lightly, for it is impossible to write so pleasantly and so well of Jane Austen without knowing many other things.

Occasionally one feels that a writer has taken an unfair advantage and had more fun with his book than he lets the reader have. This statement should not be applied too sweepingly to *Folkways in Thomas Hardy*, because the reader gains some information, and may be happily reminded, in passages like this :

Some of the countryman's sayings are almost too good to be true ; such, for instance is Crickett, the parish clerk's comment on the institution of matrimony, " Yes, matrimony d' begin wi' ' Dearly beloved,' and end wi' ' Amazement,' as the prayer book says." Surely this is the last word on this mooted subject !

The collecting and arranging of this material cannot have been too easy a task. Yet in the preface, Miss Firor says it has already rewarded her richly. We are inclined to agree, and are, perhaps—a little envious.

HELEN MORAN

# BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

KING CHARLES II. By ARTHUR BRYANT. Longmans. 9s. 6d.

KING, QUEEN, JACK. By MILTON WALDMAN. Longmans. 10s. 6d.

BERNARD SHAW. By FRANK HARRIS. Gollancz. 8s. 6d.

ELLEN TERRY AND HER SECRET SELF. By GORDON CRAIG. Sampson Low.  
15s.

ELLEN TERRY AND BERNARD SHAW : A CORRESPONDENCE. Constable.  
21s.

MY ARNOLD BENNETT. By MARGUERITE, HIS WIFE. Ivor Nicholson & Watson.  
8s. 6d.

INHERITANCE. By JOHN DRINKWATER. Benn. 10s. 6d.

LIFE'S A LARK. By "GROCK." Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

TWO months—two calendar months—nine weeks, more or less : it does not sound a very important period of time—barely long enough, I suppose, for the writing of a modern novel. But it is a long time in the life of a reviewer. That butterfly of criticism, who must always be living in the present, returns to work, after having missed an autumn publishing season, with all the sensation of a Rip van Winkle. Stunned, bewildered to see how much has happened in his absence, he stands helpless and tongue-tied before shelves full of new books, vainly seeking words in which to express his admiration for it all.

That is my case. But it is necessary to keep cool, to avoid a mere catalogue of praise. Some of the more outstanding biographies and memoirs have already been dealt with here : for instance, my tribute to Mr. Guedalla's *The Duke* may be taken as read. Glancing through the rest, the first fact that forces itself upon one is that if history has not actually been made this autumn it has, in more than one instance, been most brilliantly and vividly brought to life. Historical reconstruction is perhaps the characteristic art of this generation of biographers. And since, in that vast and but sparsely tilled field of history, to make one fact live for the average reader where no fact lived before is the highest possible literary achievement, I do not hesitate to place at the head of my list Mr. Arthur Bryant's *King Charles II* and Mr. Milton Waldman's *King, Queen, Jack*. Neither has received quite the praise that it deserves. Mr. Bryant's book has run into many editions, and well deserves it. It has properly been described as an absorbingly interesting, not to say exciting, account of the reign and character of one of the most attractive and intelligent of British monarchs. On the whole they were a dull lot, as monarchs go. Richard, perhaps, the gay crusader ; his truculent, uncertain younger brother ; Edward III, the soldier ; Henry VIII and Elizabeth—these stand out. But in Charles II for the first time we meet a type we know and can understand. He was in fact a modern—perhaps the first of them. He thought and spoke much as we do ; that is why we call him a wit. To test this the only research required is a very brief visit to the British Museum, where may be seen, exhibited in glass cases, a succession of letters from some of Charles' immediate predecessors—difficult to decipher, stiff and awkward in phraseology, medieval in spirit—and then one of his own cheerful, flippant epistles. It is like meeting a brother far from home.

All this is admirably brought out by Mr. Bryant, and has been handsomely acknowledged by his reviewers. But I am doubtful whether he has been treated quite seriously enough as an historian. I have seen many references to the wonderful vitality and colour of his picture, but few to the enormous amount of work which he must have put into it. To select (and reject) with such skill that every page is alive and satisfying (or seems so at the first glance) implies hard and concentrated reading over a period of many months. And some of Mr. Bryant's omissions are so startling, and some of his theories (the "Minette" theory, for instance) are pressed so far that it would have been but a timely compliment to his scholarship to have taken him up on these points. Charles' money difficulties are perhaps unduly emphasised (we think of every political dispute in terms of economics nowadays), and his prompt return to the arms of Lady Castlemaine after his marriage is made to appear an act of chivalry and justice. His famous court was "one of the least expensive in Europe," his government—decried as a tyranny by the Whig historians—was probably the mildest this country has ever known. On all these points—or again on his exaggerated praise of Cromwell's army—Mr. Bryant might have been paid the compliment of a little argument. It would probably have had the better of it; for he is nearly always right.

One of the reasons of the popular success of this book is its beautiful balance. It begins, dashing, with the flight from Worcester field; and from that brave opening never flags. The little-known boyhood, the undistinguished share in the Civil War, the misery of exile—all that unhappy overture is brushed aside in a page or two. Apparently an American friend of Mr. Bryant's, Professor Notestein of Yale, being sent the manuscript for his opinion, ran his pen through no fewer than forty thousand words of it, and I should guess that these are they. He made the "picture," but he sadly lopped the biography.

Mr. Waldman's equally effective reconstruction has, for some reason, attracted much less attention. His canvas is much smaller and his style less dashing; but on the other hand his characters are even more clearly cut, and his opening scene, depicting Philip of Spain at work in his private closet in the old palace at Brussels, is as vivid and convincing—in spite of its deliberate dramatization—as anything Mr. Bryant has done. Perhaps the fanciful title has deceived the public. It seems better when all is said and done, to state plainly what a book is about. Mr. Waldman's title would have gone very well as, say, a chapter heading. For it has wit. His King is, of course, Philip, his Queen Elizabeth of England, and his Jack the scheming, gossiping Spanish Ambassador. His period is that of the four brief months during which Philip was courting Elizabeth, shortly after her accession to poor Mary's vacant throne; his principal authority the letter and reports sent home by the Ambassador, di Feria. It is a brief but highly entertaining and significant episode in English history, and Mr. Waldman squeezes every ounce of amusement and instruction out of it. Di Feria's comments upon "that pestilent knave" Cecil and the other courtiers, and his puzzled attitude towards the inexperienced young Queen who alternately laughed at him and bullied him (having no intention of marrying his King) are full of unconscious humour. Mr. Waldman tells us that he had set out with the intention of writing a full-length "life" of the Queen. This is the much handier and probably pleasanter result. Compared with Mr. Bryant's bolder strokes it may be described as a delightful little etching. It is equally vivid and convincing. And it should be a revelation to those readers—if they still exist—who suppose that very detailed history must be dull.

I find it difficult to write with proper respect of the great Shaw-Terry controversy, or of the Shaw-Harris controversy, or of the Terry controversy. Books like these

should be reviewed immediately they appear. Wait a month and they diminish quite startlingly in stature—like Alice in the Wonderland adventure. But it may be said with certainty of Frank Harris's *Shaw* that the author knew little of Shaw's life (page 393), had not even read his works (page 15), and was in any case quite without talent as a biographer (pp. 387-8). All Harris's books, in fact, are about Frank Harris—an over-rated subject. The result, in this case, is precisely that "ghastly shepherd's pie" that Mr. Shaw had warned him against. The book is vigorous, provocative, shallow, noisy and bumptious—like Harris himself. As biography it hardly exists.

Mr. Gordon Craig is annoyed, not unnaturally, at the publication of the Shaw-Terry correspondence. He says that he had not wished to write this book, and we must believe him. His object is to get behind the half-joking emotionalism and gust of the other letters and to show us instead the "secret self," the "little mother," who was there all the time. He has succeeded in that. But he has not really told us very much, for who ever doubted that this secret self was there? On the other hand the Shaw-Terry controversy marks a real advance. It is impossible to read it without interest and enjoyment.

Somewhat in the same category, though screened from the full blaze of the Shaw limelight, is *My Arnold Bennett*, by his French wife. Bennett was terribly punctual, mean in little things (though generous in large ones), hated to be contradicted, intellectually intolerant, admired Lord Beaverbrook, and so on. We knew nearly all this before.

I note with respect the appearance of the first volume of Mr. John Drinkwater's autobiography. He will probably take more interest in himself as he grows older: let us wait for volume two.

Finally I beg space for a word in favour of Grock's engaging account of his adventurous career—a gay, delightful, refreshing book, accomplishing its simple purpose with an enviable perfection of art. I commend it heartily.

CLENNELL WILKINSON

# POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES. By A. C. PIGOU and D. H. ROBERTSON. P. S. King. 10s. 6d.

PAPERS ON GOLD AND THE PRICE LEVEL. By SIR JOSIAH STAMP, G.B.E. P. S. King. 7s. 6d.

GLADSTONE AS FINANCIER AND ECONOMIST. By FRANCIS W. HIRST. Benn. 15s.

AFTER THE DELUGE: A STUDY OF COMMUNAL PSYCHOLOGY. By LEONARD WOOLF. The Hogarth Press. Volume I. 15s.

WOMEN AND POLITICS. By THE DUCHESS OF ATHOLL. Philip Allan. 6s.

THE CONSCRIPTION OF A PEOPLE. By THE DUCHESS OF ATHOLL. Philip Allan. 7s. 6d.

JAPAN. By DR. INAZO NITOE. Benn. 18s.

THE central current of Cambridge economics may be taken as flowing through our first volume, whose authors (not joint but several) are the University's two official teachers of that subject. Each contributes six papers composed within the last five years or so ; but as three of Professor Pigou's employ the methods of mathematical formulae, which to perhaps three out of four economic students are unintelligible, it is Mr. Robertson who will dominate the book for most readers. Professor Pigou's predecessor in the Cambridge chair once wrote that " the chief use of pure mathematics in economic questions seems to be in helping a person to write down quickly, shortly, and exactly, some of his thoughts *for his own use*." That seems still its principal utility ; and while it is, of course, no argument against publishing mathematical economics, there is surely a great deal to be said for confining the method to volumes by itself.

Professor Pigou, indeed, concludes his first paper by referring to the need for more popularised economics. He is inclined to attribute the long time-lag between the attainment of economic knowledge by theorists and its utilisation by practical men to the fact that " the effects which a given line of policy will produce often depend in large measure on the degree of economic knowledge possessed by the general body of the public." He asks that " the main body of the people shall have some training in economics—sufficient training at least to perceive that they do not possess complete training." And he adds : " This level of attainment is already achieved in the natural sciences." But does not the last sentence beg most of the question ? What intimidates the man in the street into admitting the limits of his competence regarding the natural sciences, is not so much the complexity of their methods as the certainty and accuracy of their results. He knows he would be caught out at once, if he pretended to knowledge. But in economics, as in the other human sciences, this is not so ; when you start translating it into practice, a great deal of judgment and averaging and common-sense are called for, and in these qualities the practical business man thinks himself—and sometimes shows himself—superior to the economic theorist. It is in the same way that—to borrow an analogy from the Services—no tiro would dream that he could command a battleship, while every amateur strategist thinks that he can advise on the direction of an army. This is not an argument against teaching the man

in the street some economics ; but unfortunately what he is apt to be led to suppose that the study of economics consists in, is in indoctrinating himself into a lot of one-sided reasonings and overstrained " facts " on behalf of Socialism, or Tariff Reform, or a managed currency, on whatever the " cause " may be ; and that process certainly does not breed the intellectual modesty, for which Professor Pigou wishes. Moreover, the pretentious antics of its one-eyed victims still further lower the prestige of economics in the eyes of able business men. Yet the reasons for it are easier to see than to remedy. The mischief is that, in Luther's phrase, the Devil has been allowed to have the best tunes. The propagandist makes economics into a fairy-tale ; the professor is too content to leave it as the dismal science. One shrinks from drawing invidious comparisons between fellow authors ; but from this standpoint Mr. Robertson is very much ahead of Professor Pigou. Indeed his best work here almost tempts the hope that in him eventually economics may regain that combination of authority with wide intelligibility, which it had down to about eighty years ago, and has since so conspicuously lost. At any rate he is still developing, and one cannot prejudge how far he may go.

Sir Josiah Stamp's volume is also a collection of separate papers ; the first part containing eight composed during the past two years, while the second part gives a very interesting chronological summary and reprint of his successive utterances on the same subject from 1920 to 1928. While it is a considerable vindication of his claims to prophesy, it also exhibits quite candidly the growth and changes in his opinions. Flexibility of mind, in the best sense, is one of the most attractive features displayed in all Sir Josiah's work ; another is his skill at bridging transitions from theory to practice. One feels, however, that in him the man of business is now tending to overshadow the economist, and his thought, though always highly interesting and stimulating, is not sufficiently " above the mêlée " to carry quite the highest scientific authority.

Mr. Hirst's book, though also motived as a tract for the times, takes us back into a much older circle of ideas. It starts from the view that the England of the eighteenth-forties presents close and useful analogies with the England of the nineteenth-thirties, and that the methods by which Peel and Gladstone met the troubles of the former may guide us in solving the perplexities of the latter. One could wish that this parallel were less stressed, for it surely will not bear much stressing ; while on the other hand a purely objective historical study of Gladstone's finance would fill a long-felt need, and nobody is better qualified to supply it than Mr. Hirst. Still one must be content with what one gets ; which is an extremely readable and well-documented piece of hero-worship. Gladstone's sheer power and personality, whether as Parliamentarian or administrator, were at their zenith during the period here chiefly studied ; and it is worth recalling them to a generation, which has come perhaps to assess him too much on his later record, forgetting that in his second and third Governments, not to speak of his fourth, he was an old man, wonderful, but obviously past his prime.

In contrast to the standpoint of the economists, from which we always risk seeing history too much as a materialistic process, Mr. Leonard Woolf's book takes us right away to the view of it as an affair of psychology. His postulates are that events are made partly by men, that men are swayed by their minds, and that we must find what happened in their minds, if we are to understand what happened in the case of man-made as distinct from natural catastrophes. As an example of a man-made catastrophe, he takes the Great War ; as an example of a natural one, he cites the prehistoric irruption of the Atlantic, which submerged what is now the floor of the Mediterranean.

The fall of the Roman Empire he rather curiously assimilates to the latter, attributing it solely to the impact of barbarism from without, and forgetting Gibbon's famous epigram, which had at least the merit of emphasising the co-operation of psychological factors from within. From these basic ideas he sets out to study and analyse the "communal psychology," which made the Great War come about; and beginning from the eighteenth century he has only penetrated a limited way into the nineteenth by the end of this book, which is conceived as Volume I of a large work not yet fully planned. Though unequal, it is characterised by a wide sweep of vision, and dignified by an impressive style. One must await subsequent volumes before fully assessing the value of Mr. Woolf's thought; but the scheme and working, so far as he has yet gone, are original and very promising.

The two books which the Duchess of Atholl has published this year, though both concerned a good deal with the ephemeral wranglings and pleadings of party politics, are of rather outstanding ability in their line. Her first one, addressed to women and partly designed as a counterblast to Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*, has some *longueurs*, due, it would seem, to her not having decided clearly enough which of several quite different audiences she should address. But its best chapters are extremely clever, and incidentally she scores very heavily off Mr. Shaw over certain statements of fact. The book has definite value as a pioneer expression, in feminine terms and for feminine readers, of the Conservative mind; and it is the more interesting because, while probably most women are Conservatives, most of the women to count in public life have so far been Liberals or Socialists. Her other book, on Russia, is more partisan in tone and more ephemeral in its choice of subject; yet it is carefully done, ably documented, and temperately argued.

Dr. Nitobé's book on Japan is the latest to appear, but by no means the least remarkable, in Messrs. Benn's very noteworthy series of monographs on foreign countries. Of its author it has been said that he represents the highest combination, from the Oriental side, of Oriental with Western culture. He knows English thoroughly, and a seven years' residence at Geneva, on the secretariat of the League of Nations, has completed his familiarity with Western points of view. He surveys the geography and history of his country, its political, educational, economic and intellectual problems quite as systematically from within as any European observer would wish to do from outside; it is all there, clearly mapped out and ticketed off; and yet, as the Warden of New College puts it, his book is "not exactly the kind of book which an Englishman would have written"—a subtle but piquant idiosyncrasy makes itself steadily felt. He is very interesting on the gradual evolution of Japan towards democracy, which he wishes and expects to see go much further, while at the same time anxious to preserve as fully as possible the prestige of the Crown. Himself a Christian, he discusses open-mindedly the influence of the Christian faith on modern Japan, which he says is out of all proportion to the numbers of its communicants. The latter comprise some important figures, including nearly all the Japanese Labour leaders.

R. C. K. ENSOR

# NAUTICAL LITERATURE

SAIL : THE ROMANCE OF THE CLIPPER SHIPS. Volume 2. By J. SPURLING and BASIL LUBBOCK. The Blue Peter Publishing Co. £3 3s.

THE WANDERER. By JOHN MASEFIELD. Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

THE ROARING FORTIES. By Captain D. J. MUNRO, R.N., C.M.G. Sampson Low. 12s. 6d.

OLD SEA WINGS, WAYS, AND WORDS. By R. C. LESLIE. Chapman & Hall. 18s.

NAVAL CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS. By Rear Admiral GERARD WELLS. Philip Allan. 8s. 6d.

THE ROYAL NAVY. By GEOFFREY PARRATT. The Sheldon Press. 8s. 6d.

THE ROMANCE OF A MODERN LINER. By Captain E. G. DIGGLE, R.D., R.N.R. Sampson Low. 6s.

MOTOR CRUISING. By Commander G. C. E. HAMPDEN, R.N. Nisbet. 12s. 6d.

THE NARRATIVE OF A NAVAL NOBODY. By DOUGLAS FAIRBAIRN. Murray. 10s. 6d.

THERE are men "following the sea" to-day who have hardly ever seen a sailing ship, and the number of those who have been trained in sail gets smaller year by year. But there is something about a sailing ship which appeals to the imagination in a way which no steamer could ever do, for a sailing ship is no inanimate object : she is alive, with an individuality of her own. And of all living things a sailing ship most nearly resembles a high-spirited horse which will go perfectly under one man but is almost unrideable by another equally good horseman. "Your ship", as Conrad once said, "is a tender creature whose idiosyncracies must be attended to if you mean her to come with credit to herself and you through the rough and tumble of life." And, just as in an emergency a good horse will make almost supernatural efforts to save his rider, so, in similar circumstances

. . . a sailing ship will often accomplish prodigies of sailing which would be quite beyond her powers under less nerve-racking conditions. There are many instances so this, and old sailors firmly believed that the spirit of the ship fought her hardest to save her crew from drowning. Instances are recorded of ships coming about in half the time that they usually needed in order to scrape clear of rocks or icebergs and in this case [*Benvenue* was running full tilt on to the Snares during a Westerly gale] the little ship screwed out to windward in a way which amazed even her captain.

It is fortunate for us that the history of some of these sailing ships—now, alas ! mostly at the bottom of the sea, or, worse still, condemned to pass the remainder of their days as coal hulks in some out-of-the-way spot—have been written and their portraits painted, by those who appreciate them and who realise that a "ship is a tender creature." Mr. Lubbock is an ideal historian and Mr. Spurling's pictures are a joy to look upon ; thus between them they produce a book to which one can turn again and again with the greatest of pleasure. The picture of the *Falls of Halladale*,

by the way, shows her with nothing above her royals, although she is described as crossing skysail yards on main and mizzen. But *Sail* is a book to own and not merely to borrow.

The *Wanderer* left Liverpool on her maiden voyage on October 17th, 1890. "She was the last achievement in sailing ship building and rigging: nothing finer had been done, or ever was done." Yet within 48 hours she had lost three topgallant masts with all their yards, most of her sails were blown to rags, her rigging was loose, and she had killed her captain. In her first voyage her cargo of coal caught fire and she lost a man overboard; and on the next she took charge of her tug in the Delaware River. Small wonder, then, that she gained the reputation of being an unlucky ship. Mr. Masfield states that, writing on the strength of many legends, he may have helped to give her this reputation. But in this book he gives her whole history, partly in bald prose and partly in free verse, from the day when

Slowly she moved to the gateway that led to the river:

till, in the Elbe river, seventeen years later

Most gently she slowly leaned over and lay on her side

Her riding lights burning until they were quencht in the flood.

Then, rapidly down, with a gurgling of air and a rush

Of flood beating on her she flung herself over and sank.

Captain Munro's book is complementary to the other two. He deals not so much with the ships as with the men who sailed them. He went to sea as an apprentice and served four years in Colonial clipper ships under some of their most famous captains, "Men who would have made their mark in any profession where grim determination, courage and resourcefulness were demanded." From clipper ships he passed into steam, including service in river boats in Burma where he had many exciting adventures during the Burmese War. On one occasion he rigged up a native boat to act as "Q ship" against dacoits, and so successful was he that "river piracy became a thing of the past." Later on he joined the Royal Navy and it is to be hoped that he will carry out his threat of giving us another volume dealing with his life in that service.

*Old Sea Wings, Ways and Words* is an exact facsimile of the original edition as published in 1890, with additional notes by Mr. L. G. Carr Laughton and added drawings by Mr. R. Morton Nance. In it Leslie not only traces the pedigrees and relationships of all types of sailing vessels and their equipment, but tells us of the daily life on shipboard, and his descriptions are supplemented throughout by the most delightful and accurate drawings. His knowledge of the sea began in 1834 when, at the age of 8, he twice crossed the Atlantic in one of the old sailing packets; thus he lived through the great days of sail, and not only was he a clever artist and most competent observer, but he was a good boat sailor and a practical boat builder. Hence, as Mr. Carr Laughton says in his introduction, he produced a book which may fairly be styled a classic, and which has exerted great influence on the study of sea-lore. *Old Sea Wings* is one of the most fascinating sea books which has ever been written.

In *Naval Customs and Traditions* Admiral Wells gives us, in dictionary form, the origins of certain sea expressions. But it is disappointing inasmuch as it hardly lives up to its title. We are told, for instance, that *matelot* is the French for sailor, and that drums were an Oriental invention, but the word punishment is not given in the dictionary at all—and surely some account of the old naval punishments might well have been included.

No sane person wants another war, but until human nature is completely changed

the possibility of war can never be altogether eliminated. And, since Great Britain is an island nation, if she should ever again be forced into a war it would again be upon the "Navy, whereon, under the good providence of God, the Safety, Honour, and Welfare of the realm" would "chiefly depend." But, in spite of the part played by the Navy in the past, comparatively few people have more than the vaguest ideas about our naval history or of the naval ships of the present day. In the *Royal Navy* Mr. Parratt gives a very brief history of the Navy from the days when Edgar the Peaceful was rowed up the Dee by eight dependent kings, to the Battle of Jutland and after. But perhaps the most interesting part of the book is that dealing with the development of the modern navy and its weapons. That the British public is interested in such things is proved by the overwhelming success of the "Navy Weeks" which are organised at certain ports every year; but just as a visitor to the *Victory* would appreciate what he saw more after reading *Old Sea Wings*, so the visitor to the *Nelson* should have read *The Royal Navy*.

Similarly, those who ever have occasion to cross the ocean would do well to read *The Romance of a Modern Liner*. "Romance" is one of those words which is over-worked nowadays, when it is applied indiscriminately to every other "story" in the popular press, and at first sight it hardly seems applicable to anything so prosaic as a modern liner. But, on second thoughts, the idea of a 46,000 ton ship steering herself across the Atlantic is surely romantic enough for anyone: and the *Aquitania* is steered by a gyro-compass without the wheel being touched by the hand of man. In this book Captain Diggle, her commander, describes the building and working of the *Aquitania* from the day when the first experimental wax model was made to determine the exact shape of her hull. She was the largest ship which had ever been built at that time, 1911, and the river Clyde had to be specially widened and deepened to allow for her launch and safe navigation to the sea. The first part of this book, dealing with the building, launching, machinery and navigation of the *Aquitania* is extremely interesting, but one or two of the other chapters read rather too much like advertisements for the Cunard Company.

In *Motor Cruising* Commander Hampden gives much valuable advice to yachtsmen generally and not only to the motor boating fraternity. The first part of the book deals with technical details such as design, materials, types of engines, etc., and with the routine work on board; while the second part is devoted to elementary navigation and seamanship and the rule of the road at sea. Sailing men are apt to dislike the motorists, since the latter only too often ignore the common courtesies of the sea and behave in a manner which is "neither good seamanship nor good manners." And if only for this reason it is to be hoped that every newcomer to the sport of motor boating will buy Commander Hampden's book and study it.

We have lately had a fair number of books of reminiscences of the "old Navy," but there have been comparatively few dealing with the present day, and we could do with more of the type of *The Narrative of a Naval Nobody*. Lieutenant-Commander Fairbairn joined Osborne College in January, 1908, and was invalided out of the Service in 1924. But these were interesting years, and the writer knows how to make the most of his "Narrative."

G. B. HONY